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Language and Literacy in Multilingual Communities: An Investigation into the 'National Breakthrough to Literacy Initiative' in Zambia

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**Language and Literacy in Multilingual Communities: An Investigation
into the ‘National Breakthrough to Literacy Initiative’ in Zambia**

Chongo Musonda Mwila

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Education

University of Bath
Department of Education
September, 2009

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**“Hold my hand O Lord in my journey.
Guide me in the world the way you want.
The road is so long and very rough,
but if you take my hand, I’ll have no fear.”**

**This excerpt is from my favourite hymn.
It has been my source of encouragement and a guiding light during
this ‘journey’.**

**This thesis would not have been possible without the love of my God
and the kind support and encouragement of my family and friends.**

Abstract

This study is an investigation into the 'National Breakthrough to Literacy Initiative' in Zambia, Central Africa. The initiative is a pilot programme that seeks to address what has been identified as backwardness in reading and writing in government schools. It is premised on theories that suggest that learners who acquire a certain amount of competence in their mother tongues are likely to acquire a similar competence in second and subsequent languages (Skuttnabb-Kangas, 1981; Cummins, 2000; Alidou 2009).

The study was conducted in August 2004 in Lusaka, Zambia. After careful consideration, a qualitative approach was applied. Data sources included three interviews, a focus group discussion, four classroom observations and reference to secondary data. A smaller study was carried out in Lesotho, Southern Africa in 2005 to create a comparative basis against which the 'National Breakthrough to Literacy' initiative could be evaluated.

The study sought to investigate the new teaching methodology that is being piloted in selected schools with a view to hopefully providing evidence either (a) for the widespread adoption of the policy or (b) for consideration of certain factors in its continued application. A further purpose of this study was to investigate whether there are discernible skills acquired in initial literacy that can effectively be transferred to the learning of English. This perspective was critical in determining the extent to which indigenous languages are likely to compete with English in a globalised context.

The research revealed the relevance and significance of English in relation to the indigenous languages of the society. It also showed that the 'NBTL' initiative facilitated the transition towards the later learning of English.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

M.O.E.	Ministry of Education
NBTL	National Breakthrough to literacy
PRP	Primary Reading Programme
ROC	Read On Course
BTL	Breakthrough To Literacy
SITE	Step In To English
L1	First Language
MT	Mother Tongue
L2	Second Language
P.R.R.C.	Preliminary Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism
BNC	British National Curriculum
CDC	Curriculum Development Centre
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Educational Fund
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
DfID	Department for International Development for the United Kingdom

Chapter One

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 TOPIC

This thesis attempts to address a concern; namely that the educational language policy in my home country, Zambia, was not helping the learners to achieve the expected levels of literacy. The New Breakthrough to Literacy, henceforth referred to as NBTL, is an attempt to increase literacy levels by using indigenous languages in initial literacy in Zambia. This study therefore sought to investigate and present findings from qualitative research that was designed to explore this local literacy initiative.

1.2 THE LITERATURE

Several studies have revealed the significance of English as an 'international language' (Barrett, 1994; Kashina, 1994; Rassool, 2007; Holmes, 2008). In Africa, the economic significance attached to English has perpetuated the continued use of English in education (Barrett, 1994; Kashina, 1994). The attitudes and beliefs about the 'superiority' of English remain embedded and deep rooted in Zambia. An important strategy is the continued use of English as an official language (Kashina, 1994). It is the major means of communication and the medium of instruction in all government schools (*ibid.*). However, despite the economic and social significance attached to English in Zambia, the decline in literacy levels has largely been attributed to its use as a medium of instruction (Republic of Zambia Ministry of Education, 1996; Kelly, 1999).

Some studies have revealed that indigenous languages may not be as significant therefore in an educational context (Barrett, 1994; Kashina, 1994; Musau, 1999; Alidou, 2009). However, the value of using indigenous languages in education has been argued by several scholars (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981; Cummins, 2000; Alidou, 2009). Further studies reveal that there is strong evidence that children learn literacy skills more easily and successfully through their mother tongue and subsequently transfer these skills with ease to English (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981; Brisk 1998; Cummins, 2000; Alidou, 2009). Evidence also suggests that where bilingual programmes exist, little has been done generally to increase the capacity to transmit indigenous instruction beyond the early primary years (Barrett, 1994; Kashina, 1994; Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995; Alidou, 2009).

It is important therefore to determine what could be viewed as the most effective language in a second language learning situation. Current practices in bilingual contexts reveal the indigenous languages are used mostly for transitional purposes. The use of English continues in later primary years and secondary education (Barrett, 1994; Kashina, 1994; Alidou, 2009). It is therefore likely that despite the emergence of indigenous languages in initial literacy, English will continue to play a dominant role in

education and society (Alidou, 2009). These assertions are useful in determining the desirability of local initiatives when they have to compete with international ones (Rassool, 1999; Gunnarsson, 2000; Sifakis and Sougari, 2003; Rassool, 2007; Alidou, 2009; Prah, 2009).

In the context in which I am writing, further complexities are likely to arise because of the multiplicity of languages (Kashina, 1994). Therefore there is a need to investigate literacy practices and the complexities that are likely to arise. In particular there is a need to investigate the new government initiative, NBTL, to determine its relevance in Zambia. This research is of major value and interest because it may hopefully provide evidence either for the widespread adoption for the policy or for the consideration of certain factors in its continued application.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study has three specific aims.

1.3.1 AIM 1

The first aim sought to look critically at the NBTL and examine its usefulness as a literacy practice. I wanted to find out to what extent the intended use of the indigenous languages in initial literacy is likely to address the current backwardness in literacy levels in this multilingual context.

1.3.2 AIM 2

The second aim sought to examine the practices used in follow up steps in the initiative to find out whether the purported skills acquired in initial literacy could usefully be transferred to the learning of English.

1.3.3 AIM 3

The third aim sought to identify the complexities that are likely to arise in the implementation of new literacy strategies. An important consideration here was the significance of English in this context. A comparative look at bilingual Lesotho was intended to gauge whether ‘one practice fits all’.

1.4 THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

My research questions are directly related to my three aims.

1.4.1 RQ1: *Is the NBTL initiative in its present state likely to address the current backwardness in literacy levels?*

1.4.2 RQ2: *Are there identifiable skills in the practices therein that could be transferred to the successful learning of English?*

1.4.3 RQ3: *What are the factors that are likely to militate against the success of the initiative?*

1.5 METHODOLOGY

The nature of my investigation suggested that a qualitative approach was most appropriate since this facilitated an in-depth study. The use of multiple methods was also considered essential in that this generated a range of data that could be used to pursue issues and ensure a level of objectivity via triangulation. In order to address these research questions I used a variety of methods.

I was very fortunate in carrying out the study in Zambia when I did. I was in the right place at the right time. I approached the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) officials at a time when a group of South African Provincial Education Officers were in the country as guests of Irish Aid and the Department for International Development for the United Kingdom (DfID) to learn about the practices of NBTL. I was invited to join the group and carry out my inquiry alongside them.

This made gaining institutional access and access to the population very easy for me. I was also offered free transport and therefore I did not incur any major costs. My interview with two respondents in Zambia gave me useful background information and a clearer understanding of NBTL. I was also able to collect data from classroom observations and a focus group discussion. However, this opportunity presented some limitations in my choice of methodology and sampling as prior arrangements had been made to work with a selected sample.

The three school visits were conducted in Lusaka, Zambia. The schools were varied and provided a good scope for my study. The study lasted ten days and it allowed me to carry out classroom observations in three schools. However, I would have preferred to work with my own selected sample in an extended geographical area. An extended stay in the schools might have given a different perspective to my observations. Follow up discussions with individual teachers, using a questionnaire or personal interview might have been useful. I acknowledge the limitations this may place on my findings.

My use of secondary data was because I needed to rely on data collected in the 1999 Baseline Study (Kelly, 1999) and the 2002 follow up Study (Kelly, 2002). It would not have been possible for me as a sole researcher to carry out similar studies. This is why, despite my personal desire to base my findings on my own investigation, it was necessary for me to rely on other sources of data. These data were useful in triangulating what the interviewees highlighted as 'the unqualified success' of the interventions (Kanyika, 2000, cited in Kelly, 2002).

There are also other perspectives that were not investigated thoroughly in this study. These might have been useful for the study. The home context, which is a significant factor, was not a primary focus in the study. I relied on the views and opinions of the interviewees and participants in the focus group discussion.

Although my study provides the contextual information that would make replication possible, I would suggest a greater focus on the schools' activities over a sustained period of time and a broader investigation of parental and pupil perspectives.

1.6 ANALYSIS

I opted for content analysis in my interviews and proceeded to use consistent analytical methods in my analysis of the focus group discussion. My model of content analysis was premised on Corbin and Strauss (1990). The use of themes was helpful in understanding the factors identified. I used diagrams to represent each of the five identified themes. Thereafter I dimensionalised the properties to try and reveal the underlying meaning. These were presented as tables in the text. My classroom observations are presented as summaries.

1.7 PREVIEW OF STRUCTURE

The thesis has eight chapters. My Chapter 1 covers my introduction to the thesis. Chapter 2 gives the historical background to the use of English as a medium of instruction in this post-colonial state and the background to the NBTL initiative. Chapter 3 covers my review of literature. The careful consideration of literacy and language practices was helpful in the context of my study. Chapter 4 discusses the methodology and methods that I opted for. My data analysis is presented in Chapter 5. Data sources included two interviews, a focus group discussion and four classroom observations. My findings are presented in Chapter 6. My findings reveal the direct experiences of three field officers, four classrooms settings and the views and opinions of the fourteen focus group discussants. Chapter 7 is my conclusion. It focuses on the significance of this study in relation to these findings. My recommendations, which are presented in Chapter 8, are not necessarily the antidote to this situation. They are intended to encourage the spirit of the initiative.

Chapter Two

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER 2

In this short chapter I will discuss the background to the context. I will begin by discussing the historical background to give the reader a better understanding of the likely implications for language in this context.

2.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Zambia is an independent African state located in Central Africa. It is a land-locked country, completely surrounded by eight other countries. It is a developing nation with a modest population. Zambia's precise population is not known. The population was projected to reach 11 million in 2000 (Bwalya, Manda and Nzala, 1997:12). It is likely that in the absence of a recent census, the population may have reached, but not exceeded 15 million at the time of this study.

Zambia is endowed with abundant natural resources, rich wildlife and perennial sources of water. Despite the overwhelming potential for tourist and agricultural industries to flourish, little has been done to promote these. The economy continues to depend on copper and cobalt mining (Bwalya et al., 1997:20). Zambia is a member of several international organisations. Most recently, Zambia has joined other Sub-Saharan states to form regional economic groupings.

Zambia is multilingual because it has a multiplicity of languages (Kashina, 1994). The country has 73 recognised indigenous languages. It is assumed that the majority of indigenous Zambians speak one or more of these indigenous languages. These languages are perceived to serve 'secondary' functions in the community. This is because these languages are acquired informally, used in informal settings, at the market place, at weddings and other family functions (Kashina, 1994). Therefore these indigenous languages remain 'subordinate' in this context (ibid.).

On the other hand, English is acquired formally and is the language frequently used in education, religious life, commerce, trade and business. English is viewed as a 'higher' status language (ibid.). English is the dominant language in view of its official status in the country. Most recently, English has also been seen to be used in family life by elite Zambians who are bringing up their children as first language speakers of English (Kashina, 1994).

Zambia does not offer a bilingual or multilingual system of education. At any given time there is only one language of instruction. In situations where the local language is used in education it is either the sole medium of instruction or taught as a subject, separately from English.

2.3 POLITICAL BACKGROUND

There are two distinct eras in Zambia's history that have determined developments in education. The first era I will refer to is the pre-independence period when Zambia was known as Northern Rhodesia (1953 to 1963). 1953 saw the birth of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland in which Northern Rhodesia was an integral part (Bwalya et al. 1997:12). Zambia remained a British protectorate for ten years and only gained political independence in October, 1964. At the time, Zambia was divided into 8 provinces and had 7 official, indigenous languages alongside English, the language of the colonial masters. During this era the first four years of primary education were delivered in the official, indigenous language of the province. English was introduced in Grade 5 and became the language of instruction thereafter.

The second era covers the period immediately after independence (1965 and possibly up to 1996). After the attainment of independence in 1964, many reasons were advanced for the use of English as a sole medium of instruction. One major factor was the multiplicity of indigenous languages in the country (there are 73 recognised indigenous languages in Zambia). It was argued that if one vernacular was chosen this might ignite political tensions and cause political instability (Kashina, 1994). Another view was that the late introduction of English in the school system had an impact on general attainment in the language. Therefore, the decision was made to drop all the African languages and adopt English in all government schools. This decision became enshrined in the 1966 Education Act. Thus the post independence era saw the implementation of this new language policy and the anticipated improvement in learning (Bwalya et al., 1997:20).

2.4 BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

From 1965 to date the official language policy for Zambia's schools has been that English should be the medium of instruction for all subjects. However, Zambia has grappled with low literacy levels since its pre-independence days. It was recognised as far back as 1966 that literacy levels were low. The UNESCO Report (1964) suggested it was necessary to give many teachers further training in English to enable them to teach it with ease and confidence (UNESCO, 1964:2). This led to a massive expansion of Teacher Training Colleges in the period soon after independence (1966 to the late 70s) to presumably equip teacher graduates with the necessary skills (Republic of Zambia Ministry of Education, 1996:26). Coupled with this rapid expansion of the system, however, was a decline in real funding for the sector (ibid.:26).

In later years, The Ministry of Education attributed the backwardness in literacy to the use of English in education. By 1977, it was generally agreed that learning through the medium of English was detrimental to educational achievement (Linehan, 1999:3). Amidst these concerns the government produced a comprehensive policy statement for education entitled '1996: Educating our Future'. This document suggested that the use of English in initial literacy had an impact on the reading skills of many Zambian children (Republic of Zambia Ministry of Education, 1996:39). The document stated: "There is strong evidence that children learn literacy skills more easily and successfully through their mother tongue, and subsequently, they are able to transfer these skills quickly and with ease to English." (Republic of Zambia Ministry of Education,

1996:39). A similar view had been articulated by UNESCO as early as the 1960s (UNESCO, 1963:1).

In more recent years, however, a number of initiatives to reverse this backwardness have been advanced. Prominent among these is The National Breakthrough to Literacy (NBTL) initiative under the umbrella of The Primary Reading Programme (PRP). The National Breakthrough to Literacy (henceforth referred to as NBTL) is at a pilot stage. Therefore a total reversal in language policy has not been effected. A reversal in national policy would require the repealing of the 1966 Education Act.

2.5 BACKGROUND TO THE BREAKTHROUGH TO LITERACY INITIATIVE

It was important for me to find out the origins to the Breakthrough to Literacy initiative and try to establish the possible influences behind it. The NBTL was initiated under the umbrella of the Primary Reading Programme (PRP) by the Ministry of Education in 1998 and tasked with reversing the extremely low literacy rates recorded in Zambia's Primary Schools. One of the first priorities was to establish reliable baseline data against which any further gains in literacy could be measured. These literacy tests in both English and the indigenous language for the designated province were administered in November 1999. The study is commonly referred to as the 1999 Baseline Study (Kelly, 1999). A follow-up study (Kelly, 2002) was conducted to evaluate the initiative.

In Zambia, the Molteno Project Team Pilot study took place in 1998. The Molteno Project Team, a South African based Non Governmental Organisation (NGO), evaluated the programme and then based on deliberations about the evaluation, adapted materials and developed trainer training. Having trained a cadre of trainers in 2000, they handed over to the Ministry of Education to take responsibility for the continuation of this effective programme in all primary schools in the country. Thereafter it was the responsibility of the host country to become responsible for the continued implementation (B.R. Ramokgadi, *pers. comm.* 25th May 2009). At the time I conducted the study in 2004, the programme was being piloted in 800 schools in Zambia. The Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) continued to work in conjunction with Irish Aid to oversee the successful implementation of the programme.

2.5.1 BACKGROUND TO THE CHOICE OF LANGUAGES IN THE NBTL

Originally there were eight provinces and Lusaka, the capital city, was a part of Central Province. A decision was made in the 1980s to create this ninth province for administrative purposes. In this province within a province, Chinyanja is the community language. Chinyanja is also the community language in the Eastern Province. Therefore, Chinyanja has this official status in two of the nine provinces. Chibemba dominates in three provinces. It is the community language on the Copperbelt (industrial heart of the country), Luapula and Northern Province. Silozi is the community language in the Western Province and Chitonga is the community language in the Southern Province (agricultural south). The situation in North Western Province is that there are three community languages to accommodate three small but rather volatile tribal groupings.

Therefore NBTL is available in the following languages in Zambia: Chinyanja in Eastern and Lusaka Province, Chitonga in Southern Province, Chibemba in Northern, Luapula and Copperbelt Province, Kikaonde, Lunda and Luvale in the North-Western Province and Silozi in the Western Province.

A widespread adoption of the policy is not anticipated in the near future although the plan is to retain English as the medium of instruction after Grade 2. The NBTL literacy initiative has devised strategies to facilitate ‘bilingual’ literacy. It is hoped that these strategies will enable the children to acquire initial literacy in a familiar language in many government schools and move on to acquire literacy in English. Preliminary evaluation in the participating schools conducted by this study should hopefully provide useful data.

2.6 CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER 2

In this brief chapter, I have discussed the background of the study that may be necessary to help the reader appreciate the context. I have used this discussion to chart significant educational contexts from the colonial era (when Zambia was a British Protectorate) to date. I have also looked at language policy in relation to literacy practices, past and present.

Having discussed the background, I will now go on to survey literature that may be useful in refining my research aims.

Chapter Three

3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER 3

In this chapter I will discuss various studies that have examined the matter of literacy in second language learning. I will consider issues that relate to an African context in general and then Zambia in particular. It is against this background that I will discuss the issues and the arguments for and against using local languages in education in Zambia.

3.2 LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION

Historical and current social, political and economic perspectives are inextricably woven in issues of language in national systems (Pennycook, 1994; Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995). These considerations have impacted on language in education in most post-colonial states in Africa and Asia (Barrett, 1994; Kashina, 1994; Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995; Rassool, 1999; Holmes, 2008; Brock-Utne and Skattum, 2009). The choice of a suitable and acceptable language policy has been and still remains a burning issue for most independent African states (Barrett, 1994; Kashina, 1994). The local languages are perceived as relevant in the society but they are not accorded the same prestige as the 'international' languages (Barrett, 1994; Kashina, 1994; Musau, 1999; Brock-Utne and Skattum, 2009). Myers-Scotton (1993:10) asserts that despite Swahili's long history as a lingua franca in East Africa, no prominence has been bestowed on it. Musau (1999:117) suggests that most indigenous African languages have been confined to the so-called primary functions. A similar situation prevails in present day Zambia.

Brisk (1998:1) refers to the pioneering study conducted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) as early as 1953. The study referenced several studies that affirm that an equal or better command of the second language can be imparted if the school begins instruction in the mother tongue (*ibid*: 2). Hornberger (2003:19) suggests that the creative application of L1 knowledge to L2 learning is helpful in these situations. A recent study suggests African languages can be used effectively if there is adequate technical support for their implementation (Boly, Brock-Utne, Diallo, Heugh, Alidou, 2009, all cited in Brock-Utne and Skattum, 2009). However, in most Sub-Saharan African countries, the language of the former colonial masters remains the medium of instruction (Baldauf and Kaplan, 2004; Brock-Utne and Skattum, 2009). In Zambia, a lack of technical support for the implementation of educational strategies for seventy three indigenous languages is acknowledged (Kashina, 1994).

Rassool (2007) acknowledges that the highly competitive global market has created the need for national governments to adopt coherent educational policy strategies in order to develop the skills and knowledge potential within post-colonial states. Such claims exert pressure on school systems to ensure this foreign language acquisition. In Zambia,

English is seen as the ‘vehicle for prosperity’ and mastery in the language may be seen as essential for employment (Kashina, 1994). English is also considered as a unifying factor in this multilingual context (*ibid.*). Therefore the reasons for the continued use of English as the medium of instruction are ideological as well as political. This issue of the significance of English in this context will be discussed in further sections.

Having discussed language in the context of education, I will now discuss the likely effects on language policy.

3.3 LANGUAGE POLICY IN AFRICA

The suggested use of national languages in education in Africa dates back to 1953 when UNESCO insisted education should be delivered using the mother tongue (Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995:340). Evidence suggests that African leaders have deliberated and agreed to policy that seeks to promote the use of African languages in education (Bamgbose 1991, cited in Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995:335). During the 1960s, goals formulated at UNESCO conferences agreed to principles that would be useful to promote this (*ibid.*: 341). The 1961 UNESCO conference in Addis Ababa was intended to perpetuate the principles of development and nation building (Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995:340-341). Article 6 (2) of the Organisation of Africa (OAU), now known as the African Union (AU), ‘Cultural Charter for Africa’, adopted in 1976, urges member states to promote teaching in national languages (*ibid.*:335). The 1986 plan covers the promotion and encouragement of their extended use to education and mass literacy (Bamgbose 1991, cited in Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995:335). As a member of the African Union (AU), Zambia is a signatory to both plans.

Further calls for the ‘eradication of illiteracy’ have since been made. However, the declaration of the International Literacy Year (1990) has been described as meaningless in the context of third world countries (Street, 1995:17). This is because of the elaborate definitions and distinctions associated with literacy and illiteracy in the West (*ibid.*: 19). For instance, by suggesting the use of a common language, the basic motivating principles of the ‘Cultural Charter for Africa’ herein perpetuated the continued use of English (Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995:340-341). However, in several multilingual countries, English is the only common language. Therefore the promotion and encouragement of the use of African languages may be seen as a matter of policy and not necessarily practice (*ibid.*: 335). Baldauf and Kaplan (2004:8) suggest historic and neo-colonialist systems are responsible for portraying European languages positively. However, one might argue that in the light of political independence the onus is on African governments to reverse this.

Ideally, the international community is seen to promote and encourage the use of African languages in education. However, evidence suggests the continued perpetuation of English in Anglophone countries (former British colonies) is structural as well as ideological (Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995:338). Preiswerk (1980, cited in Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995) suggests English is ‘glorified’, ‘idolised’ and ‘entrenched’ in a colonial context. In this respect English is automatically viewed and accepted as the dominant literacy (Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995:338). Baldauf and Kaplan (2004:6) suggest such ideologies emerge out of these wider socio-political and historical frameworks. In the present case we see that English is still believed to be

the inevitable world language (Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995). Ouedraogo (2000, cited in Alidou, 2009) argues that western and African policy makers strongly resist promotion of policy in indigenous languages. This suggests political leaders of independent African states have reduced control in matters of policy (ibid.).

Recent studies suggest the colonial legacy remains embedded in the form of 'linguistic imperialism' (Ansre, 1979; Hancock, 1989; Kashoki, 1989; Craig, 1990; Rubagumya, 1990; Bamgbose, 1991, all cited in Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995). These views are highly critical of the continued significance of the former colonial languages. The term 'linguistic imperialism' suggests that African leaders have reduced control over matters of policy (Alidou, 2009; Prah, 2009). This may not be entirely correct. For instance, in Zambia matters of language policy have been dictated largely by government. This is evidenced in my earlier discussion of the historical and political background which outlines significant developments in education. The choice to retain English, a former colonial language, is politically expedient (Kashina, 1994). It is also seen as a practical choice. This is because little has been done to promote the use of indigenous languages in an educational context (Kashina, 1994). Therefore, the suggestion that African countries generally may be actively seeking 'emancipation' may be too presumptive.

In most African countries, language policy is of vital importance for the political stability and legitimacy of the state (Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995:335). Heugh (2000) asserts that the last four decades reveal that policy has more to do with political expediency than linguistic considerations. Baldauf and Kaplan (2004:9) share a similar view. They assert that evidence suggests that 'official' policy planning is driven by 'political' and not 'linguistic' forces. In these multilingual contexts, the colonial language may be seen as a unifying factor (Myers- Scotton, 1993; Barrett, 1994; Kashina, 1994; Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995, Pennycook, 1998). This is one of the stated reasons why there has been no official change in language policy in Zambia. However, the current situation advocates liberal practices that afford children wider language opportunities (Linehan, 1999).

Another identified factor is the declining capacity of African governments to meet the expectations of their citizens (Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995:335). Phillipson (1992, cited in Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995:339) asserts that 'structural' and 'cultural' inequalities ensure the continued allocation of more material resources to English. This is compounded by the unavailability of resources for the development of African languages (ibid.: 47). Rodney (1973, cited in Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995:339) refers to this as the economic underdevelopment of these societies. Building on this, Bailey (1991, cited in Pennycook 1998:139) writes that economic colonialism has replaced the direct political management of third world nations. These stated views, however, could also be identified as another form of colonialism. This is because these voiced criticisms do not propose credible alternatives to the present situation. Some African countries are better placed than others to meet the needs of their citizens. Therefore, these countries should be encouraged to develop resources for the development of African languages. This way there will be fewer countries seeking and depending on donor aid.

Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas (1995:341) suggest that official policies are abetted by 'aid'. Building on this, Baldauf and Kaplan (2004:7) state: "It is possible that a

language is ‘officialised’ in the hope that aid funding (often from the former colonial power) would come into play.”(ibid.: 9). Alidou (2009:108) argues that donor funded or aided projects are heavily influenced by these benefactors. She suggests that credible findings and research that does not necessarily fit ‘power holders’ perspectives may be shunned (ibid.) This is described as having a ‘crippling hold’ on policy decisions in education and other sectors (Prah, 2009). In Zambia, the NBTL initiative is largely co-sponsored by Irish Aid and DfID. In Lesotho, BTL is co-sponsored by the United Nations Children’s Educational Fund (UNICEF). This suggests both countries lack the capacity to promote indigenous initiatives without donor support. However, this does not in any way suggest that the projects in these contexts are culturally and educationally flawed (Craig, 1990, cited in Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995:342).

Limitations that have been observed might have more to do with practical application and could eventually be resolved. Alexander (2000:170) suggests that the equality of status and usage of the African languages must be translated into practice. Rassool (2007:153) suggests ways in which the status of local languages could be raised. This view is supported by Brock-Utne and Skattum (2009:112) who argue that effective language policy and successful implementation can allow African languages to be effective tools for socio-economic mobility. Brock-Utne (2000: 241) postulates that several countries in Africa (among them Zambia) have defined language policies whereby African languages are strengthened as languages of instruction. The extent to which they have effectively been translated into practice, however, remains to be seen.

Having considered these matters, I will now go on to discuss literacy in relation to this context.

3.4 LITERACY

I will begin by defining the term using a socio-cultural approach and then go on to discuss the theoretical perspectives underpinning the theory of literacy.

The traditional view of literacy as the ability to read and write is being challenged by socio-cultural perspectives that could be viewed as ‘new literacies’ or ‘social literacies’ (Gee, 1996; Street, 2001). The new trend has been towards a broader consideration of literacy as a social practice and in a cross-cultural perspective (Street, 1995:1). This involves the rejection of the dominant view of literacy as a ‘neutral’, technical skill and the conceptualisation of literacy instead as an ideological practice (ibid.) These literacies take the socio-cultural approach that suggests literacy leads to good and multiple effects (Gee, 1996; Street, 2001; Egbo, 2004; Rassool, 2007).

Building on this, Street (1994:139) recognises a multiplicity of literacies and literacy practices that are related to specific cultural contexts (ibid.: 141). More recently, Street (2001:23) states: “Approaching literacy as a social practice provides a way of making sense of variations in the uses and meanings of literacy in such contexts.” Rogers (2001:206) suggests literacy is a social construct and recognises that it varies from context to context. Similar comments are shared by Herbert and Robinson (2001:121). These views are helpful in understanding ‘literacy’ as a socio-cultural practice.

I will now discuss the three theoretical frameworks underpinning my definition of the term literacy. The three are useful in helping the reader to understand that in the context

of ‘new literacies’ the idea of being ‘literate’ can be depicted from the positioning of people on points along a ‘literate continuum’ (Skutnabb-Kangas 1981; Rassool, 1999). Therefore, being defined as ‘literate’ in this sense may be viewed with a certain amount of value attached to it (Street, 2001:21).

3.5 THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

3.5.1 FUNCTIONAL LITERACY

The construct of functional literacy may be conceptualised as basic or elementary (Graff, 1994, cited in Verhoeven, 1994:40). Egbo (2000:216) is of the view that it is a level of reading and writing sufficient for everyday life but not for completely autonomous activity. A similar descriptor refers to the process and content of learning to read and write in the preparation for work and vocational training, as well as increasing the means of productivity (Republic of Zambia Ministry of Education, 1996:50). Functional literacy may also generally be defined in relation to the acquisition of sufficient reading and writing skills that enable one to function in society (Egbo, 2004).

Egbo (2000:217) believes it is necessary to facilitate skills that enable one to participate in the social, economic and political processes that will transform one’s life. A further descriptor by Rassool (1999:6) alludes to a set of technical skills, representing a quantifiable education resource to be evaluated against economic outcomes criteria. Street (2001) shares the view that literacy alone does not teach a person how to function in society. A crucial consideration therefore is how these skills are imparted and their contribution to personal development. In Sub-Saharan Africa, infant mortality is said to be greatly reduced in areas where mothers have basic literacy for everyday life (Egbo, 2000:217). Studies in Zambia attribute life expectancy to higher levels of education as basic literacy may create awareness of basic health, nutrition and hygiene (Republic of Zambia Ministry of Education, 1996:73).

Historically in Zambia we see how the provision of literacy has largely been premised on the ‘autonomous model of literacy’ (Street, 1995:132). This suggests that emphasis has been on the provision of knowledge and not so much understanding and application. Kashina (1994) makes reference to the acute problems of manpower Zambia faced immediately after independence on account of the colonialists’ provision of an ‘inferior’ education to the natives (*ibid.*). Kashina (1994) suggests the backwardness in literacy being referred to in Zambia may be as a direct consequence of “quantitative levels of literacy’s diffusion”. This suggests a lack of quality in current educational provision. Rassool (1999:8) alludes to this as the utilitarian vocational meanings that framed the concept of functional literacy.

In view of the acknowledged low literacy levels, it might be expected that the focus may remain on vocational skills (Republic of Zambia Ministry of Education, 1996; Kelly, 1999). However, Kelly’s 1999 Baseline Study criticises the way English is taught in schools in Zambia. He advocates a more creative approach that involves more skills and understanding (1999:7). Therefore the NBTL initiative might be chiefly concerned with more than just the demand for basic skills.

3.5.2 CULTURAL LITERACY

In seeking an apt definition for the term ‘cultural literacy’, I have opted for descriptors that may be helpful in this particular context.

Foley (1997:14) views culture as the transgenerational domain of practices through which human organisms in a social system communicate with each other. Graff (cited in Verhoeven, 1994:40) refers to cultural literacy as literacy in relation to civilisation. Rassool (1999:8) suggests it may constitute a central variable of cultural power which is grounded in the shaping of a reflexive self-identity, self-definition and cultural transformation. Street (2001:142) highlights the significance of literacies as sites of negotiation or transformation. Allan (2002:77) is of the view that identifiable childhood experiences lead to internalisation of these and other cultural values. Therefore the notion of cultural literacy may be viewed as the ability to understand and appreciate the similarities and differences in the customs, values, and beliefs of one’s own culture in relation to the cultures of others (ibid.).

However, cultural literacy may exist in tension. For instance, one view of cultural literacy may relate directly to the notion of linguistic competence. Bourdieu (1990, cited in Byram, 1997:19) asserts that Foreign Language Teaching should concentrate on equipping learners with the means of accessing and analysing any cultural practices and meanings they encounter regardless of their status. This view is shared by Christensen (1994, cited in Byram, 1997:18). These assertions are of particular interest where a foreign language and culture may often be perceived as pervasive and invasive. This is because western practices may be seen to have an impact on society. Kashina (1994:22) argues that English to some extent dislocates Zambians from their cultural practices (ibid.). This may, however, be inevitable in a multilingual context. This is because the use of English is not restricted to formal contexts. It is widely used in informal contexts too.

Kashina (1994:22) contends that the learning of English in this context may create another culture based on a constellation of relationships. In particular, he refers to the behavioural differences of affluent Zambians as having led to the creation of an elite class in a stratified society (ibid.:22). Kashina (1994:23) makes reference to ‘unilinguals’: elite families using English or a variety of English as the first or main language. Writing in a similar African context, Barrett (1994:13) makes reference to a ‘bureaucratic bourgeoisie’. The idea of belonging to a social group might largely determine cultural allegiance in this context. Bourdieu (1982, cited in Joseph, 2004:74) argues that the dominant language may present possibilities for symbolic domination. In the context of this study, cultural literacy may be closely associated with the school context. This is because the socio-economic status of the learners in the particular context of the study may place them at the bottom of the identified strata.

3.5.3 CRITICAL LITERACY

There are several theoretical perspectives on critical literacy (Freire, 1970; Gramsci, 1971; Habermas, 1997, all cited in Hooks, 1994 among others) which are central to the understanding of the concept of critical literacy. The focus here is the relevance and significance of textual interpretations in the broadest sense, the understanding of definitions and the encompassing of analysis beyond the ability to decode words. Critical literacy is often regarded as inherently political because it challenges

established readings. A related definition is attributed to Stables (2003:61). He suggests it is the ability to 'read' socio-cultural practice and attempts at hegemony through the study of texts, thus allowing readers to gain some control over ideologies and socio-cultural practices. According to Stables (2003:62) the world of employment values the development of skills which can be associated with notions of critical literacies.

Byram (1997:19) suggests an approach which focuses on processes and methods of analysing social processes and their outcomes to provide learners with critical tools and to develop their critical understanding of their own and other societies. Cummins (2001:65) acknowledges that effective instruction in a second language must focus initially on meaning and messages. He suggests that in order to engage students to their cognitive maximum and deepen their understanding of language and content, comprehensible input must be transformed into critical literacy (2001:74). Kelly (1999:7) is highly critical of the way English is taught in schools in Zambia. He suggests that skills which can be associated with notions of critical literacies are amiss because the emphasis is mostly on basic skills (ibid.). Rogoff (1995 cited in Armour, 2001:3) alludes to the concept of participatory appropriation that leads to transformation.

Rassool (1999:9) asserts that critical literacy demands skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for exploring and making informed decisions in a democratic society. Freire (1970, cited in Hooks, 1994:47) alludes to issues of the individual and identity in liberation struggles. Pennycook (1994:297) asserts that critical pedagogy views schools as cultural and political arenas where different, cultural, ideological and social forms are constantly in struggle. However, it is unlikely the NBTL initiative in this initial stage could be seen to promote critical literacies in the broadest sense. This is because critical literacies that may be significant in the context of the west may not be so in the Zambian context. For instance, what Hooks (1994:47) may consider issues of economic colonization and a new breed of marginalisation under the guise of 'donor aid' may be welcome in this context. For example, the transitory nature of the NBTL donor funded initiative is accepted without question. Therefore, such issues with underlying political connotations may not be of immediate concern in this context.

Armour (2001:3) shifts the focus from the commonly held view of critical literacy as the interpretation of texts in the broadest sense to the ability of individuals to display responsible participation with others. Street (1995:19) argues that people should be allowed to manage their daily lives, intellectually, emotionally, practically and economically without the elaborate definitions and distinctions associated with literacy and illiteracy in the west. For instance, a study by Parajuli and Enslin (1990, cited in Egbo, 2004:246) shows how women achieved critical consciousness through a literacy programme. That is to say, functional skills that involve the 'day to day' use may also create consciousness and challenge oppressive practices (ibid.). Street (1994:161) contends that the measurement of the distribution of literacy in a population may in fact reveal relatively little about the use to which those skills could be put.

A further factor is what Rassool (2007:150) suggests is a growing number of economically disadvantaged, and linguistically/culturally disempowered, peoples living disparate lives within the global cultural economy. Therefore, using quantitative analysis to measure the success of literacy practices may be limiting. What may be significant here is how the current literacy practices in Zambia are able to develop and

sustain the skills that are relevant in this context. A further assertion is that personal demands for literacy could be satisfied with the skills commonly held (Street, 2001.) Such evidence places the often-asserted contemporary decline of literacy in a new and distinctive context (ibid.).

Having considered these three frameworks, I will now go on to discuss dominant and non-dominant literacies.

3.6 DOMINANT AND NON-DOMINANT LITERACIES

I will begin by addressing issues that make the distinction between dominant and non-dominant literacies. These perspectives are of particular significance in Zambia where it is widely assumed that ‘being literate’ is synonymous with the ability to read and write in English (Kashina, 1994).

Various studies have examined what may be seen as lower status and higher status literacy (Street, 2001). “According to Ferguson’s (1959) categories: H languages are prestigious, learnt formally and used formally while L languages are acquired at home and used in informal situations” (Barrett, 1994:5). In a western migrant situation the lower status literacy may be that assigned to literacy skills in managing the household (domestic), higher status literacy may be that offered by college courses (Street, 2001:140). Domestic literacy would be trivialised as literacy that increases job opportunities is more valued (ibid.). In most Sub-Saharan countries and in Zambia in particular, English is seen as a higher status literacy and the indigenous languages despite their intrinsic wealth continue to perpetuate a lower status (Kashina, 1994). A similar view is articulated by Alidou (2009).

Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas (1995:338) assert that certain beliefs provide foundation for beliefs in absolute superiority of a language. Pennycook (1998:139) argues that a key argument in support of the superiority of English has been in the breadth of its vocabulary. Rassool (1999:60) asserts that the relative value attached to particular languages in national policy may derive from dominant ideas about what constitutes the ‘nation’ and may be directly related to cultural, economic and linguistic factors. Street (2001:142) suggests that in such instances, the dominant literacy may be presented as the only literacy. This has implications for the vast majority of languages in former colonies that have not gone through the processes of development (Barrett, 1994; Kashina, 1994; Pennycook, 1994; Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995; Pennycook, 1998; Baldauf and Kaplan (2004).

The relationship between dominant and local literacies may be useful in forming relationships. Rogers (2001:208) comments on a study in Bangladesh (South East Asia) and dispels the commonly held belief that dominant literacies tend to marginalise the local literacies. He shows how local literacies can be used for economic communities in the home and community (ibid.: 208). Blanc and Hamers (2000:222) share the view that it is merely a matter of social evaluation conferred upon a language or variety by social groups. Herbert and Robinson (2001:123) state: “Language policies, educational language use, language planning and the languages of the media all contribute to patterns of access to power and exclusion from it.”

Rogers (2001:209) also highlights the fact that the dominant literacy can be viewed as a power tool. This power ensemble can be subjective, arbitrary, give educational, political, economic legitimacy (ibid.). This view is helpful in understanding Pennycook's (1994:18) assertion that English has a significant role as a 'gatekeeper'. For instance, during the apartheid era in South Africa (1948-1990), Afrikaans and English were seen to have social and economic currency (Rassool, 1999). A deliberate strategy was to deny Africans access to political and economic power by promoting the use of African languages, albeit in a negative sense to segregate and limit (Heugh, 2000:235). Kashina (1994:20) equates this to the lacklustre nature of the education provided to most locals in colonial Zambia (1953-1963). Building on this, Egbo (2004:248) suggests colonial education created a literate, albeit inferior working class.

This discussion will now be used to examine some popular beliefs about literacy and development.

3.7 LITERACY AND DEVELOPMENT

Graff (1994:154) contends that viewing literacy in the abstract as a foundation in skills that can be developed, lost, or stagnated is meaningless without connection to the possessors of those skills. This suggests that literacy practices alone are not always the panacea for some social ills. Graff (1994:161) argues that increasing rates of popular literacy may not be directly responsible for ever-rising capabilities or qualitative abilities- or, for that matter, declining capabilities. This may relate directly to the mistaken belief that literacy confers direct benefits on the people who attain a qualification. A further factor is that skills that may have been sufficient in the 1970s may not be adequate to meet the challenges of today. Graff (1994) describes this as the dynamism of literacy. Othman (1990, cited in Barrett, 1994:10) suggests that what may be perceived as the backwardness in literacy levels may actually be as a result of the backwardness of practices.

In the context that I am writing in, literacy in English may have more significance than literacy in an indigenous language (Kashina, 1994). Barrett (1994:13), writing in a similar context, suggests the very ability to speak English in itself confers status. This is because English is viewed as likely to present more social and economic benefits (Kashina, 1994). Kashina (1994:23) suggests that the differential levels of literacy in English create a stratified society. He argues that this is 'development purely for self' (ibid.). However, the former President of Tanzania, Nyerere (1962 to 1985) argues that stratification in these instances could be justified as 'service of the many' (Barrett, 1994:7). Nyerere contends that the segregative nature of the literacy practices is inevitable (ibid.). This is because Nyerere believes the 'literate' in society will work for the benefit of the masses. What we have are two contrasting views premised on different perceptions about literacy and development.

Graff (1994:160) suggests the growing perceptions of the values and benefits of literacy are among the major factors that explain the historical contours of changing rates of popular literacy. Kashina (1994: 22) asserts that there is a widely held belief that a literate workforce will lead to increased productivity and ultimately economic development. Rogers (2001:206) is of the view that the precise way in which literacy leads to development is not clear. In Zambia, for instance, the popular belief is that literacy is likely to yield 'white collar opportunities' or office based jobs. This may have

implications for the society as literacy in English may not necessarily guarantee people the opportunities they hope for. We have created a situation where most school leavers look down on manual labour. What we have is a mass of 'literate' but unemployed youths. Therefore, literacy does not always bring the anticipated benefits.

Having discussed literacy and the popular notion that it leads to development, I will now discuss issues of globalisation.

3.8 GLOBALISATION

Kellner (2000:300) suggests globalisation is the strengthening of the dominance of a world capitalist system, supplanting the primacy of the nation-state through a global culture. Tobin (1999, cited in Sifakis and Sougari, 2003:60) suggests globalisation is a fashionable word to describe trends in increasing connections and communications among people regardless of nationality and geography. According to Gunnarsson (2000:51) globalisation is portrayed as an inevitable, universal development that demands everyone's participation, economically, political and culturally. In support of this, Sifakis and Sougari (2003:60) contend that globalisation as a term denotes the economical, political, and cultural interrelationships. However, they also recognise that there may be different interpretations or realisations depending on the observer (*ibid.*). These general terms cover what may be referred to as the 'novelty' of globalisation (Kellner, 2000:300).

Sifakis and Sougari (2003:60) suggest it is easier to understand the globalisation phenomenon when it is represented in multi-faceted domains. Therefore in one domain, globalisation can be conceived as the existence of a common global culture. Rassool (2000:58) suggests that the economic and political significance of 'world' languages has translated into 'linguistic' and 'cultural' definitions. Rassool asserts that the ubiquity of American films and the global marketing of English Based Popular Culture represent powerful means to construct 'secondary' cultures. Thus the notion of a global culture may suggest the acceptance of new forms of cultural imperialism (*ibid.*: 59). This may be inevitable given the status of these world languages. For instance, in Zambia it is more socially acceptable to speak English (Kashina, 1994).

A further view suggests the notion of 'globalisation' can also include the idea of competence in using English. Phillipson (1992:6) attributes this to the non-exhaustive list of the domains in which English has a dominant place. Rassool (2007:149) suggests that ex-colonial languages and, particularly, Standard English may represent preferred linguistic capital within the global cultural economy. Pennycook (1994:34) suggests English is situated in many contexts and therefore globalisation may be context specific. He argues that English encourages and promotes social, political and economic inequalities and suggests questions should be asked about what types of English culture and knowledge deserve credibility in a global context (*ibid.*:pp18-20). In Zambia, it is largely presumed that western norms are synonymous with the notion of globalisation. This has had significant impact on attitudes towards indigenous languages and culture (Kashina, 1994).

Another consideration is whether technological advancements and computer literacy may impact on a global culture. Rassool (2000:59) asserts that new technologies have defined new boundaries. Burbules (2000:327) suggests that the internet is becoming the

primary medium for the transmission of several goods and services around the world. However, according to Rassool (2000:59) this high economic currency of information technology may have implications for many developing countries. In Africa, the declining capacity of governments to meet the expectations of their citizens is acknowledged (Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995:335). Rassool (2007:109) alerts us to the potential for exclusion, marginalisation and polarisation because investment resources, growth and technology tend to be concentrated in a few industrialised countries. This is highly significant in Sub-Saharan Africa (*ibid.*).

It is important to recognise that the notion of globalisation may exist in tension. Rogers (2001:212) argues that there is no one 'development' universal and neutral, but there are many developments all ideologically constructed. Rogers further acknowledges the increasing challenges to traditional approaches to development that may necessitate changes within the theory and practice of these developments (*ibid.*:212). This is supported by Pei (1965:28) who proposes a framework that takes into consideration current status of the world's languages, the past and present factors, the possibility of utilisation and the social, political and economical circumstances. These views may be significant in the next section where I will present another perspective on the issues surrounding globalisation and English as an international language.

Having discussed these issues, I will now go on to consider the status of English as an international language and how this issue may impact on particular individuals, communities and countries.

3.9 ENGLISH AS AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE

The issue of English as an international language and how this issue has been intensified as a result of globalisation is a major consideration in this study.

The higher status of some international languages may be justifiably attributed to their economic worth giving them a niche in most societies and economies (Phillipson, 1992; Rassool, 2007; Alidou, 2009). English is referred to as a global language because it is used extensively and therefore seen as a dominant language (Kashoki, 1989; Rubagumya, 1990; Akinnaso, 1991, all cited in Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995: 341). English is represented at an official level in most of its post-colonial territories (Pennycook, 1998:8). Carter and Youssef (1999:31) acknowledge the 'internationalness' of English, with its representation at an official level in diverse territories. English remains the official language in some former colonies in Africa and South-East Asia and is used extensively as a foreign language in dominant economies in Europe (Phillipson, 1992; Pennycook, 1994; Pennycook, 1998). English continues to enjoy this significance despite the emergence of other powerful economies (Phillipson, 1992; Barrett, 1994; Rassool, 1999).

The importance of the linguistic connection between developing countries and their former colonial masters cannot be over-emphasised especially if that connection translates to an economic level (Barrett, 1994; Kashina, 1994). Rassool (2000:59) asserts that 'world' languages embody a potent form of hegemonic cultural capital. Alexander (2000:170) articulates a similar view. English is certainly important to Africans in Zambia and most of its neighbouring countries (Barrett, 1994; Kashina, 1994). Kashoki, 1979 and Chishimba, 1981, both cited in Phillipson and Skutnabb-

Kangas, 1995, share a similar view. Phillipson (1992:7) suggests that English has been successfully promoted. So much is this that neighbouring Tanzania, which is not an Anglophone country, chooses to retain the use of English in education (Barrett, 1994:pp7-8). The notion of globalisation and the perpetuation of a global culture may be significant in this regard.

There is also clear evidence that the hegemony of English as a world language is being contested. Kashoki (1989, cited in Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995:343) argues that the role of English in nation building is secure though not unchallenged. Cooke (1988, cited in Pennycook, 1994:13) argues that English is the language of imperialism. Phillipson (1992:47) suggests the dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment. A similar view is articulated by Pennycook (1998:8). Phillipson (1996, cited in Pennycook, 1994:22) states: "It is clear and deliberate government policy in English-speaking countries to promote the world-wide use of English for economic and political reasons." Brock-Utne (2000:239) suggests 'colonialisation' is evident when reference is made to 'English Speaking Countries in Africa', when the majority of Africans cannot speak English. However, Rassool (2007:89) contends that the colonial linguistic hierarchy remains largely unchallenged. This is because there is little evidence to suggest a formidable challenge is in place.

A further issue is the suggestion that English as a language of power and prestige is used to further capitalism (Pennycook, 1994:13). Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas (1989, cited in Pennycook, 1994:2) assert that it is in the interests of Britain and America to perpetuate capitalist interests. Phillipson (1992), Pennycook (1994), Brock-Utne (2000), Rassool (2000) severally, suggest that one of the strategies involves the invalidation of the non-material resources of dominated groups. This is referred to as the continuation of linguistic imperialism (Alidou, 2009; Prah, 2009). However, a formidable challenge to this 'international-ness' of English in the foreseeable future may be unlikely. This is because the ideological and structural perspectives are deeply embedded in some of these societies. For instance, English is the common language in regional economic and political groupings in Southern Africa. In Zambia, it is also the language of business, trade and communication (Kashina, 1994).

The threat that English poses to other languages is another factor for consideration (Phillipson, 1992; Hooks, 1994; Pennycook, 1994). Hooks (1994:168) asserts that a colonising European culture rendered African languages meaningless. This is, however, more explicit in the history of African slaves in nineteenth century America (ibid.). In a Sub-Saharan context, local languages were not entirely wiped out but were marginalised (Kashina, 1994; Barrett, 1994; Musau, 1999). However, even with the attainment of political independence these languages remain largely marginalised (Kashina, 1994; Pennycook, 1994; Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995). Phillipson (1992:7) writes that whereas English was imposed by force in colonial times, contemporary language policies are determined by market forces. This alerts us to the fact that despite the historical background the value of English may depend on the context. This may be inherent in the economic, political and ideological constraints that several African countries face (Hooks, 1994; Pennycook, 1994).

Having discussed the issue of English as an international language, I will now go on to discuss English in second language situations.

3.10 ENGLISH IN SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING SITUATIONS

Cummins (2000) revisits the threshold and interdependence hypotheses which to a certain extent cast some doubt upon the very early introduction of a second language when the learner's first language has not been sufficiently grasped. Barnes (1990, cited in Barrett, 1994:9) highlights the cognitive benefits in support of Mother Tongue teaching. Writing in the same context, Othman (1990, cited in Barrett, 1994:10) suggests the expressive and exploratory language already in the learners' experience should be utilised. Alidou (2009) supports the idea that students need to be comfortable in their culture and their language to create the self-esteem through which they will become successful learners. I am of the view that familiarity with the language in use is an appropriate strategy for managing transition into the school system.

Musau (1999:121) postulates that there was a time when first language influence in second language learning was assumed to exist and other instances when it was downplayed by some scholars. Regardless of the divergent positions taken regarding first language influence on second language learning, it is now generally accepted, that the native language has an important role to play in the second language learning process (Alidou, 2009). Cummins (2001:61) attributes this to the significant roles of these languages in the community and the motivation children have to acquire them. Alidou (2009:109) refers to recent studies of language acquisition that suggest it may be necessary to drive the use of vernaculars in early literacy and beyond. On this account there is a place for local languages in education (Brock-Utne and Skattum, 2009).

There are, however, other issues that arise if schools are to meet the needs of a multilingual population. One factor is that bilingual programmes are often viewed as early exit transitional programmes that do not promote additive bilingualism (Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995; Alidou, 2009). Cummins (2000) suggests one should be taught at least five years in the first language so that an adequate standard of reading and writing may be attained. Alidou (2009:109) suggests phased bilingual programmes should take into account the learners' learning readiness. The NBTL is premised on the belief that once students have basic communicative skills in the L1 they can begin reading and writing in the L2, transferring the literacy skills they have learned through the mother tongue (Hornberger, 1993; Linehan, 1999). However, thereafter instruction in the indigenous languages ceases. Baikie (2006:3), who writes in a similar context to Zambia, recognises that the learners are not able to demonstrate their competence in either language.

A second factor is teachers' professional knowledge, which may be of critical significance to the smooth operation of the NBTL initiative. The issue that arises is teacher preparedness for the continued use of English thereafter. From a pedagogical point of view, it is generally observed that though teachers are trained to use English as a medium of instruction, they are often insufficiently competent as models (Kashina, 1994:20). Africa (1980, cited in Kashina, 1994:24) attributes this to educational background, social background, socio-economic status, and urban-rural context, all of which are seen as actual causes of variation. These views suggest teacher professional knowledge should be tailored to fit in with Standard British English. Fairclough (1997, cited in Sifakis and Sougari, 2003:64) calls for a foreign-language pedagogy which

promotes ‘critical awareness’ and concentrates on analysing the way language is shaped by society.

What may be useful in this context is the suggestion by Sifakis and Sougari (2003:64) to create certain language criteria in ways that language teaching can be used for societal change. Therefore, the need for professionally qualified teachers to provide adequate instruction is recognised. According to Kelly (1999:7) the elements of inventiveness, resourcefulness and creativity are missing in the Zambian context. He suggests a structured framework that enables teachers to implement a child centred, language experience approach which helps to develop initial literacy in the mother tongue of the pupils (*ibid.*:8). Similar comments are attributed to (Pennycook, 1994; Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995; Alidou, 2009) who argue that it is necessary for young children to grasp the basics of language in their mother tongue before they venture into the realm of an alternate language.

The next section is a discussion of English in my home country, Zambia.

3.11 ENGLISH IN ZAMBIA

Zambia is acknowledged to be a multilingual country (Kashina, 1994). The multiplicity of languages in an urbanised context may have an overwhelming impact on psycho-social and linguistic relationships (Holmes, 2008). Zambians of different ethnic backgrounds tend to use English in cross-cultural settings. English in Zambia is not only perceived as a dominant economic language, it is also seen as a crucial unifying factor in this multilingual state (Kashina, 1994). Evidently, English in Zambia is used for official, social and interpersonal communication in addition to its use for wider communication (Kashina, 1994:19). Therefore, people who speak different tribal languages are likely to resort to the official language in formal and informal situations (Barrett, 1994; Musau, 1999; Holmes, 2008).

For economic reasons, many countries have preferred to teach the prescribed standard of English and for which relatively cheap teaching materials are readily available (Myers-Scotton, 1993). Pei (1965:88) suggests that a standard language is the speech form which has official recognition and is used by the more educated speakers. A similar pronouncement is made by Kashina (1994:17). Therefore, Standard English, a UK-centred or US view is more likely to be seen as the desirable standard. However, Kachru (1991, cited in Phillipson, 1992:26) suggests the issue of standardisation ignores the sociolinguistic and pragmatic realities of the different contexts. Baldauf and Kaplan (2004:10) argue that the notion of ‘standard’ is contrary to the reality of linguistic diversity in African states. Rassool (2007:148) supports the case for the existence of local dialects directly linked to geopolitical and historical relations.

The Standard English model may not be viable in the Zambian context due to a number of factors outlined by Africa (1984, cited in Kashina, 1994). For instance, although English is the official language of communication, it is not assured that all Zambians possess equal ability to converse in English (Kashina, 1994). It is common to expect different variants of English from the different social groups. The issue of stratification as a result of differential levels of literacy is prominent in this context (Barrett, 1994; Kashina, 1994). Kashina (1994:24) acknowledges the emergence of code-switching (the use of items from two different languages; speakers switch between a Zambian

Language and English). For instance, in some official work places, it becomes necessary to use a mixture of different languages in which one is able to provide limited support for the explanations one offers (Kashina, 1994). The vitality of code-switched varieties of language in utterances is acknowledged by Myers-Scotton (1993) and Gardner-Chloros (2009).

In Zambia today, we have the emergence of what is commonly referred to as Zam-English (Zambian English). Kashina (1994:23) suggests this could be attributed to the way other languages exist and are used alongside English. He contends that this is as a result of gradual and spontaneous interaction between English and Zambian languages (ibid.:25). Kashina argues that this may be inescapable and evidence for this type of language has been drawn from readily available data comprising both spoken and written sources (rallies, speeches, newspapers, official letters etc. (ibid.:25). The implication here is that this is now an accepted form of language in this society. However, the Zambian variant of English may be less desirable and less likely to accord individuals the status of 'global' citizen in a broader context. This is because Zambian English is more likely to be seen as a lower status of English than British or American Standard English in a global context (Kashina, 1994).

However, the fact that the 'superiority' of English over the vernaculars has not been contested does not imply English is 'unchallenged'. In Zambia, the mere emergence of Zam-English and the way it has successfully penetrated the society (visible in national media, campaigns) suggests a challenge has been presented. This challenge may, however, not be so pronounced in the absence of an official national language. In Tanzania, where Kiswahili is the recognised national language, it is acknowledged that conflict exists (Rubagumya, 1991, cited in Barrett, 1994:3). A further factor is that although Zam-English (Zambian English) may not be prestigious it demonstrates how resourceful human beings can be in aiding communication. This argument is supported by Haynes (1981:1) who postulates that utterances might be ungrammatical but cannot be viewed as errors just because they do not conform to certain conventions of language. Spender (1980) suggests this is not uncommon in the United Kingdom where it has been demonstrated that the English language has rich and flexible resources for meeting people's needs.

In Zambia, we also see the emergence of 'intra language code-mixing', to include elements of various native languages and the target language (Kashina, 1994:24). Herdina and Jessner (2002:11) suggest that there is evidence of cross-linguistic contact occurring in bilingual speakers and second language learners. However, this discussion does not suggest in any way that Zambians generally have failed to attain a near native competence in their learning of English. Although there have been no studies carried out to determine the extent to which this is so, I am a living example of what some private schools have turned out. This is evident in my ability to read, write and speak with near native competence. Immersion experiments carried out in Canada during the 1970s provide an example of students successfully being educated through a medium which is not their mother tongue. Pedagogically it has been shown that students can learn their subjects and English itself well using the latter as a medium of instruction (Barrett, 1994:8). Cummins (2000:98) suggests the extent of mastery of these formal language skills is directly linked to future educational and economic opportunities. This is an important consideration in Zambia where linguistic competence may be closely associated with success (Kashina, 1994).

I will now proceed to discuss literacy practices in Zambia in general and then consider the NBTL initiative in view of the observations I have made.

3.12 LITERACY PRACTICES IN ZAMBIA

In this section, I will discuss the NBTL as a literacy practice in a national system in Zambia. Zambia continues to use a former colonial language as a lingua franca but has recently demonstrated the desire through practice to promote the use of local languages in initial literacy (Linehan, 1999; Kelly, 1999). I will begin by discussing language policy in Britain, the former colonial power. Firstly, the British perspective is useful in the light of assertions by my interviewees in Zambia that the Breakthrough to Literacy Initiative is premised on a British Model (Linehan, 1999). Secondly, it was important for me to consider whether historical ties may be interwoven in what may be seen as an effective literacy practice in Britain.

The issues surrounding literacy in England, however, are very different from those in Zambia, its former colony. Although the basic aim in both is to improve literacy, the context varies. Gee (1996) refers to literacy as a socially contested concept. In England and Wales, the British National Curriculum of the 1990s was a deliberate policy to raise standards in the schools on the basis that literacy is fundamental for learning (Stubbs, 1994:16). The fact here is that the literacy initiatives in England and Wales have been an attempt to try to improve teaching practices in order to facilitate learning using an existing language policy. Emphasis here has been in changing the practice and not so much the principle. The situation in the former colony is therefore vastly different. In Zambia, the proposed policies are trying to improve literacy in English by seeking to develop skills in the local languages initially (Kelly, 1999:3).

The similarities expressed may be restricted to the fact that both initiatives are premised on literacy. The British National Curriculum applies only to state schools making its effects more difficult to monitor and predict (Stubbs, 1994:95). Similarly the NBTL is only being piloted in state schools. Therefore the notion that this is a 'national' objective, intended to address backwardness in literacy is debatable in both contexts. Another factor is that Zambia's literacy initiative is also largely influenced by the Johannesburg based Non Governmental Organisation, Molteno Project Team, henceforth referred to as Molteno. However, the extent to which Molteno can provide adequate technical support for the programme is reliant on donor funding (Linehan, 1999). Therefore, we have a situation where the success of the literacy initiative in Zambia is dependent on 'donor aid'. Alidou (2009:110) suggests this aspect is common to several African initiatives.

I will now go on to discuss some of the socio-economic determinants that are likely to affect school literacy in the context of my study. I will try to examine these factors and try to gauge their implications on this literacy initiative.

3.12.1 SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

The socio-economic status of the learner (or perhaps, to be more precise, that of his/her parents or relatives) determines to a large extent the effectiveness of the language learning process and attainment (Lareau, 1997). In American society, at least, the level

of parental involvement is linked to the class position of the parents and to the social class and cultural resources that class yields (Lareau, 1997:712). Similarly, Kelly (1999:27) suggests that a potent way of making a positive impact on the reading and writing proficiencies of school pupils is to build up the literacy skills of their parents. Stites (2001:183), in his experience of rural China, observes a lack of reading materials in poor households. Robinson-Pant's (2001:181) survey in the poorer neighbourhoods of the Indian state of Kerala revealed similar findings. Thus the scarcity of resources might contribute more to this deficiency in home support as opposed to a lack of interest.

It is recognised in Zambia that there are many poor and vulnerable households. The Priority Survey of 1993 shows that only 18% of households in Zambia had an income that was sufficient to provide for nutritional and other basic needs (Republic of Zambia Ministry of Education, 1996:70). This shows clearly that at least close to 80% of the households are extremely poor. Therefore it is very likely that poverty and the lack of requisite academic support at home may have implications for learning in this context. The promotion of broad based participation in allowing various stakeholders to take responsibility for education has created many private schools (Kashina, 1994; Republic of Zambia Ministry of Education, 1996:70). What this effectively does is reduce the voice of dissent and discontent, thereby reducing the margin of resistance which would otherwise be presented by middle class families. Evidence suggests the majority of students receiving literacy initiatives of the NBTL are the poor and vulnerable in the society (Linehan, 1999).

This issue of poverty and its implications is a useful factor that should be acknowledged in whole-scale literacy campaigns. Alidou (2009) suggests that educational provision and national literacy campaigns should take such factors into consideration. She argues that when they are externally generated and funded, often planning tends to be done in total isolation from reality (ibid.). For instance, the lead advisers in the NBTL referred to the success of literacy initiatives in neighbouring Southern African countries. However, if one is to consider neighbouring Botswana and its current status, Zambia is economically and politically disadvantaged. Zambia, with its multilingual status, is likely to face more hurdles than Botswana, which is mono-vernacular (one main recognised and nationally spoken indigenous language). Botswana has richer mineral reserves (gold and diamonds) while Zambia continues to rely on copper and cobalt exports. Therefore, Botswana may be better placed to support BTL initiatives. The point I am trying to make here is that 'one suggested practice cannot fit all'.

3.12.2 COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

The issue of cognitive development is a critical consideration in poor African countries. Myers (1993:1) acknowledges that investment in the early years promotes optimal development. In Zambia, it is stated that widespread poverty affects education in several ways (Republic of Zambia Ministry of Education, 1996: 70). It is acknowledged that chronic malnutrition affects 46% of the rural population and 33% of the urban population (ibid.:73). The Ministry of Education, therefore, recognises that these children are likely to show poor cognitive functioning thereby slowing or diminishing performance (ibid.:73). In this context, poverty is likely to have severe implications on education as the health of a child may be affected in many ways. Robinson-Pant (2001) describes similar conditions in poor communities of Asia. Alderman and Engle

(2008:356) contend that the improved capacity to learn may be a direct consequence of nutritional status on the development of the brain. Thus acknowledging the factors that may affect cognitive development may be useful in this study.

The significance of cognitive development is also evident in the United Nations proviso for an early childhood programme rationale (Republic of Zambia Ministry of Education, 1996: 38). Dunkelberg, Garcia and Virata (2008:26) argue that investing in young children is likely to improve the chances of these children to succeed in later life. The Ministry of Education in Zambia acknowledges that children of the poor find themselves poorly prepared, frequently hungry, and in a seemingly artificial world, where they struggle to perform (ibid.:70). The Ministry of Education also recognises the impact of health problems; poverty related diseases and the dual challenge of coping with the effects and empowering communities (Republic of Zambia Ministry of Education, 1996:73). In Zambia, it is further acknowledged that this is just a side spectre to the plethora of diseases that affect the poor. The emergence and rampant spread of AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) has further exacerbated the situation (Republic of Zambia Ministry of Education, 1996:74-75).

3.12.3 THE COMMUNITY

Stites (2001:181) reveals two levels of imbalances in the local patterns of literacy practices. He establishes another context outside the school and home that can be considered as another literacy enhancing environment (ibid.). The Baseline Study (1999:5) refers to English as “the alien language”. However, English as the official language plays a major role in communication. The media qualifies as a major transmitter of linguistic influence in Zambia (Kashina, 1994). English programmes constitute close to 98.5% for national television, while the major and popular radio stations are all in English. The NBTL is based on the premise that the community languages can easily be acquired through peer group interaction. Cummins (2001:61) acknowledges the intrinsic relevance of community languages. What is evident therefore is that English like the indigenous languages may also be classified as a community language.

Another consideration may be the way rural communities impede girls in realising their potential through education (Republic of Zambia Ministry of Education, 1996: 63). This is another factor that may have implications on intended developments. The issue of poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa and its implications for gender, literacy and development are highlighted by Egbo (2000). The Ministry of Education recognises that in the rural areas, this may be a major factor (1996:73). The colonial hegemony is blamed for the inferior role attached to gender literacy (Egbo, 2004). However, male/gender relations remain largely debatable in an African context where it is assumed ‘a woman’s place is in the kitchen’. What must be facilitated, however, are the skills that will enable women to contribute to their children’s cognitive development. Studies in Zambia acknowledge that basic literacy may create awareness of basic health, nutrition and hygiene (Republic of Zambia Ministry of Education, 1996:73). Egbo (2004) recognises the positive impact of literacy in rural Nigeria.

Having discussed literacy practices and the socio-economic factors that are likely to have implications for this context, I will now discuss some theoretical perspectives in second language learning.

3.13 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES IN SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

I will begin by defining the term ‘bilingualism’. I will then go on to discuss additive bilingualism and valorisation in this respect.

3.13.1 BILINGUALISM

The classic definition of bilingualism postulated by Bloomfield (1933, cited in Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981:82) suggests that bilingualism is the ‘native-like control of two or more languages’. Oksaar (1971, cited in Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981) refers to bilingualism as the free use of two languages. This is a follow-on to Rivers’ (1969, cited in Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981:86) assertion that a child should be considered bilingual as soon as he is able to understand and make himself understood within his limited linguistic and social environment. Herdina and Jessner (2002:13) argue that bilinguals do not generally achieve the same levels as monolingual speakers as a result of ‘reduced mastery’ in both. These contrasting views suggest there may be many, varied definitions.

In the context of this study, a broadened sociolinguistic definition which concerns itself with linguistic competence, language use and the likely attitudes may be most appropriate. Skutnabb-Kangas (1981:81) suggests bilingualism can be discussed as characteristic of an individual or a phenomenon in society. She argues that some definitions may either be too broad or too narrow thereby presenting difficulties in specifying sufficiently precise degrees of competence or incompetence (*ibid.*:82). Skutnabb-Kangas (1981:81) suggests positioning points along a continuum extending from the moment of an individual’s first contact with the language to the state of complete bilingualism. Building on this, Blanc and Hamers (1989:7) suggest there is no precision and operationalism that can be used to define ‘native like competence’ or ‘minimal proficiency’. This is because these terms may be conferred depending on the context.

Hornberger (2003:10) recognises that language may fulfil one or a range of functions. She contends that definitions for both terms (bilingualism and literacy) lie at points on a continuum which could be inevitably and inextricably related (*ibid.*:5). Although the ultimate aim of the NBTL might be to achieve balanced ‘biliteracy’, the opportunities are greatly reduced in later primary years. In the present case, the initiative is focussed on equipping the learners with the requisite skills in a bilingual learning environment only up to Grade 2. The use of the term ‘biliteracy’ may be unhelpful. This is because the degree of competence in bilingualism can not be specified in this or any other context. On the other hand, there might be a measurement for literacy levels. The results of which might be more acceptable. Erickson (1984, cited in Hornberger, 2003:5) comments that ‘biliteracy’ can be taken to be ‘radically’ constituted by its context. This alerts us to the fact that ‘biliteracy’ may be a socially contested concept.

In a multilingual context languages may be appropriated for different functions (Myers-Scotton, 1993; Kashina, 1994). In Zambia, we see the continued existence of indigenous languages, albeit in more social functions (Kashina, 1994). Boyles, Hubbard and Woods (1999:5) comment on the growing recognition of the multilayered nature of what is meant by bilingualism and that the quality of bilingualism differs according to the languages concerned (*ibid.*: 6). Duhamel (1965:7) suggests that equilingualism is

theoretically and practically impossible. Studies in support of this thinking point to the fact that one needs identical experiences in both languages to possess an equal mastery (ibid.). Byram (1997:11) suggests that few if any bilinguals are 'perfect' in linguistic competence, even less so in sociolinguistic or socio-cultural competence.

Clearly, many factors may militate against the individual desire to be bilingual. Prominent among these are purposes the language may be appropriated for. The socio-economic background and the school context are also important factors for consideration. This view is supported by Lightbown and Spada (2006:26) who argue that limitations that may be observed in the language of bilingual individuals are more likely to be related to the circumstances in which each language is learned. Toukomaa (2000:215) suggests the inability to learn the deeper meaning of concepts in another language is directly related to the level of incompetence in the mother tongue. This is highly debatable. I say this because as a second language learner I have been able to demonstrate my competence in English in many ways. This is despite the fact that my knowledge of my mother tongue is very limited.

Cummins (2000:175) suggests aspects of bilingualism have positive effects on children's linguistic and educational development. Building on this, Alidou (2009:111) argues that bilingual programmes are better alternatives to English only or French only programmes. These arguments suggest that bilingual programs might have the capacity to promote and enhance first language students' literacy skills and accelerate their academic development in the second language situation. Caution, however, must be exercised in making strong claims for bilingual advantages because of the difficulties of controlling background variables in some of the studies (ibid.).

Alidou (2009) asserts that although recent initiatives have considered the use of African languages in education, the use is restricted to initial literacy. We have seen a general picture emerge where the practice is that by Grade 3, local languages are succeeded by the lingua franca, which remains prominent throughout later years. Therefore these initiatives may be viewed as different models of transition to the lingua franca as opposed to sustainable practices (ibid.). This is because the consideration of their sustainability and further use in education is not discussed (Bamgbose, 1991 cited in Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995:339). In Zambia at present, there is little evidence to suggest that issues of sustainability have been raised.

3.13.2 ADDITIVE BILINGUALISM

Blanc and Hamers (2000:221) suggest that additive balanced bilinguality develops if there is no conflict for the individual and the society. Similarly, Lambert (1979, cited in Toukomaa, 2000:215) suggests subtractive bilingualism is where a second language overpowers the position of the mother tongue. In Zambia, language is seen as a means of communication and therefore the natural vehicle for a host of other elements of culture (Kashina, 1994). In this context, most citizens have an indigenous language as L1 and are second language learners of English. In several cases both languages are valued as they are seen to perform specific and significant functions in the community and the educational system (ibid.). The functions of the two languages may, however, be too diverse to ensure additive balanced bilinguality.

Gardner (1985, cited in Blanc et al, 2000:219) suggests that additive and subtractive bilinguality as acculturation modes are not necessarily linked to majority and minority, but rather with the individual reaction to L2 learning. Cummins (2000) acknowledges the positive effects on the learners' linguistic and educational development. However, this is only possible if the learners are provided with opportunities to develop desirable literacy in both languages (ibid.). Lightbown and Spada (2006:26) believe if one language is highly valued in the community, that language may eventually be used in preference to the other. This view is supported by Rassool (2007:110).

Cummins (2000:173) suggests that schools are likely to deny bilingual students cognitive and linguistic benefits of additive bilingualism. Baker (1992) argues that this may create 'negative' or 'positive' bilingual experiences. Alexander (2000:172) recognises the need to promote an additive bilingual approach to afford children access to effective acquisition of English in South African schools. Alidou (2009:111) is of the view that the end goal of any language in education policy must be the attainment of additive bilingualism. This issue may, however, have implications for multilingual contexts. In some instances in the NBTL, the indigenous language is not necessarily the mother tongue of the learner. Therefore, the promotion of literacy in local languages that may be considered socially and academically insignificant might be challenged by some parents.

Further complexities may arise in some African countries where literature to support academic advancement in African languages may be unavailable (Kashina, 1994; Kelly, 1999). Brock-Utne (2000:239) contends that African languages are stigmatised and not viewed as a useful resource. In Zambia, the indigenous languages are not extended to the later years of schooling. It is also acknowledged that they are not sufficiently developed to be used in later years (Kashina, 1994). The educational value attached to English is demonstrated in its 'covert' use in secondary education and formal examinations (Phillipson, 1988, cited in Stubbs, 1994:212). Thus learners may have a frail hold on the benefits of bilingualism. This is because the use of the indigenous languages is limited to short spans in education.

3.13.3 VALORISATION

According to Malmberg (1977, cited in Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981:88) valorisation could be defined as the ability to 'fit', acting in both language communities without any disturbing deviance being noticed. Skutnabb-Kangas (1981:88) uses a descriptive profile to define the term 'valorisation'. She considers the speakers' own conception of her competence and how well she fulfils the demands for bilingualism according to the identified parameters (ibid.). This view suggests the speaker's own view of her competence may be largely unchallenged. Blanc and Hamers (2000:222) suggest that language valorisation is a process which depends on the social environment. Therefore it is important to consider how this developmental interrelationship influences the degree of competence the bilingual attains in two languages (ibid.).

Valorisation of both languages may depend largely on parental choice as to whether to maintain the heritage language in the home (Blanc and Hamers, 2000:214). In Zambia, it is acknowledged that English is the recognised and accepted medium of instruction (Kashina, 1994). Several parents state that they send their children to school to learn English for social and economic advancement (ibid.). There is also evidence to suggest

that several middle class families are using English in preference to their own local languages (Kashina, 1994). This shows that several parents are not averse to the overwhelming influence of English (ibid.). Despite the high esteem accorded to their own indigenous languages they assume that these are to be learnt and developed at home (ibid). Evidence also suggests that several parents are not averse to their children picking up other indigenous languages in the community (Linehan, 1999). However, they might react to the deliberate inculcation of other local languages and cultures in formal education. Perhaps a conclusion can be drawn here is that people tend to assign social roles to indigenous languages.

Having discussed Bilingualism and related issues in the last three sections, I will now discuss issues of identity in relation to this context.

3.13.4 ISSUES OF IDENTITY

In the context of this study, the sociolinguistic situation is determined largely by birth (mother tongue) and economic need (language in education) (Kashina, 1994; Holmes, 2008). We have seen how various languages are used at different times and for different occasions. Egbo (2004:15) asserts that identities are historically either valued or devalued depending on current social ideologies. Baker (2000:70) states: "Identities are never static or permanent, never singular and rarely unified." Sometimes, there is also the tendency to code-switch as may be deemed appropriate (ibid.). Cummins (2000:pp97-98) argues that it is even more common to find this trait in children who find it easy to code-switch and adapt to most situations they find themselves in.

Herbert and Robinson (2001:123) suggest considering acquisition and use of literacy practices to determine notions of identity. They are also of the view that issues of identity emerge all the more strongly where linguistic diversity compounds the variety of literacy practice (ibid.). Blanc et al (2000:218) assert that bilingual children are more likely to have a bicultural identity and positive ethnic perceptions than monolinguals. This view is echoed by Duhamel (1965:xxxv) who acknowledges that the integration into a language of new ideas is both a criterion of the vitality of the language and of the culture of the group which speaks it.

In a plural society, one anticipated consequence of the dominance of one language is the disengagement of the other (ibid.: xxxv). Although such a situation may be largely anticipated in a western context, it is, however, also representative of many African societies (Kashina, 1994). Joseph (2004:75) suggests issues of identity production and identity reception are inextricably related. He argues that one is perceived, interpreted and measured within the network of social hierarchies based on the distribution of cultural capital (ibid.:75). In Zambia, Kashina (1994) makes reference to the creation of an 'educated elite'. This may be unavoidable. This is because in this context, perceptions are highly valued. Several Zambians believe that being associated with a higher class in society is likely to yield more social benefits. This is evidenced in the social networks that exist (Kashina, 1994).

The conflict this is likely to present is discussed in the next section.

3.13.5 CONFLICTS OF IDENTITY

The perception that indigenous languages are inferior to the lingua franca is likely to create conflicts of identity in any context. Therefore the school has an important role in helping the resolution of this paradox: retaining the child's heritage language and identity and culture, while allowing that child entry into the host language and culture (Joseph, 2004:72). Writing in an African context, Linehan (1999:3) suggests L1 teaching reinforces pupils' self esteem by validating their cultural identity. Allan (2002) suggests validating students' home languages and cultures in the school. In Zambia, there may have been attempts in the post-colonial era (1964 to the mid 90s) to isolate indigenous languages in education. The situation now is that the NBTL initiative seeks to work alongside English to promote bilingual literacy.

Kashina (1994:22) argues that the aim of teaching English in Zambia is not to create another culture. He states: "English in Zambia has gradually prevailed over all the local languages by virtue of the roles it plays in society." In a global world perhaps the desire to raise children as world citizens precludes the desire to develop ethnic identities in them. For instance, the notion of globalisation and the belief that everyone should aspire to be a global citizen is likely to have implications for local cultures. In instances where children are of a minority language and culture they may also forget their mother tongue for lack of hearing and using it (Duhamel, 1965: xxxii). Cummins (2000:175) contends that bilingualism is not just a societal resource but also an individual resource that has the potential to enhance several functions. Joseph's (2004:73) suggestion that supports linguistic accommodation to allow for various identities to co-exist is helpful here.

Baker (1992:101) suggests attitude to a minority language may be influenced by the peer group in the case of adolescents. He argues that attitudes to minority languages may be positively or negatively endangered by Anglo Pop Culture or English language Mass Media (ibid.). Bourdieu (1991, cited in Blackledge and Pavlenko, 2004:15) suggests those who are not speakers of the official language are subject to symbolic domination if they believe in the legitimacy of the language. This is particularly significant in the light of Rassool's (2007:109) comments that American commodity culture may be misconstrued as a global culture and lure people of poorer economies into falsehoods. This is significant in the context I am writing in where the media portrays western values as appropriate models. English has emerged as a powerful tool to reflect this 'modernity'.

3.14 MULTILINGUALISM

I will now look at multilingualism in the context of third language acquisition and consider the complexities that may arise.

Cenoz (2001:1) contends that the acquisition of additional languages is common in multilingual communities in Africa and Asia where children speak one or more languages at home and in the community. He suggests the use of two languages as languages of instruction and one as a subject (ibid.: 3). This is because in these multilingual contexts, it is largely assumed by the population that the children will acquire the local or regional languages spoken in their environment and a language of wider communication in the school (Barrett, 1994; Kashina, 1994; Musau, 1999). A similar view is shared by Alexander (1986, cited in Heugh, 2000:235). In multilingual

South Africa, it has been suggested that all children entering school should be immersed in the relevant African language, in light of the social and cultural strength of English and Afrikaans (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1997, cited in Alexander, 2000:171). Cummins (2000:175) suggests the interaction of education and students' academic language proficiency produces positive outcomes when the sociolinguistic conditions are right.

According to McEntee-Atalianis and Pouloukas (2001:20) individual multilingualism is viewed as a necessary condition for the global economy of the 21st century. They suggest that this is encouraged in Europe but not at the expense of the maintenance and promotion of national languages (*ibid.*). Blanc and Hamers (2000:214) state that the individual outcome of an early multilingual experience is not only dependent on the individual but also on the ideology of the society in which the person lives. For instance, it is largely true that international trade, foreign relations and technological advancement are dependent on English (McEntee-Atalianis and Pouloukas, 2001:19). They further suggest that the ability and desire to harness multiple social identities and therefore exploit multiple cultural relations has led to linguistic hegemony (*ibid.*:35). However, it must be noted that in these instances, the viable option in these contexts is English. This is because English has become a symbol of capital, a source of investment and distinction (*ibid.*:19).

These views may, however, have more significance in a wider context. This is because the notion of multilingualism may be preferable if it extends to a language with 'economic currency'. This is acknowledged by McEntee-Atalianis and Pouloukas (2001:19). Where language is viewed as the vehicle for upward mobility, the reasons for learning it translate to economic gain and social advancement (Kashina, 1994). This suggests the knowledge of English in the context I am writing in and in a broader context. In contrast, Phillipson (1992:23) asserts that the notion of the dominance of English supports the monolingual western norm that sees a multiplicity of languages as a nuisance. Unfortunately, Phillipson's views do not consider the socio-economic challenges prevailing in several African countries. Until these governments are economically independent, western definitions will continue to define these and other boundaries.

What may be more helpful in the context of this study is improved instruction to enable learners to attain some mastery in a higher status language alongside the indigenous languages.

3.15 CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER 3

In this chapter I have discussed aspects of language in education with particular reference to language policy and literacy practices in an African context. Firstly, I have tried to show the hegemonic power of English in this context. I have also tried to show the direct influence of historical, ideological, political, socio-economic and structural factors on the socio-cultural and sociolinguistic connotations in the context of my study. Such issues may be even more pertinent in Zambia where the multiplicity of indigenous languages poses a political as well as ideological challenge.

Secondly, I have also discussed the theoretical frameworks of literacy which relate to knowledge, skills and understanding. I have discussed these in relation to notions of 'globalisation' and the 'international-ness' of English. This allusion to a 'global culture'

has had implications for individuals and societies. Thereafter, I have discussed the issue of indigenous languages in an educational context. I have also discussed some theoretical perspectives in language learning and the impact they may have on the second language learning societies.

These issues have been helpful in refining my research aims.

I will now go on to discuss my choice of methodology in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

4.0 METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER 4

In this chapter I will discuss the research methodological choices that were most appropriate for the study.

4.2 RESEARCH AIMS

This thesis attempts to address a concern; namely that the educational language policy in my home country, Zambia was not helping the learners to achieve the expected levels of literacy. This is backed up by a nationwide study conducted in 1999, identified as the Baseline Study. The Baseline Study sought to provide reliable data against which future gains could be measured. Working from this background study, my own research has three specific aims.

4.2.1 AIM 1

The first aim sought to look critically at the NBTL and examine its usefulness as a literacy practice. I wanted to find out to what extent the intended use of the indigenous languages in initial literacy is likely to address the current backwardness in literacy levels in this multilingual context.

4.2.2 AIM 2

The second aim sought to examine the practices used in follow up steps in the initiative to find out whether the purported skills acquired in initial literacy could usefully be transferred to the learning of English.

4.2.3 AIM 3

The third aim sought to identify the complexities that are likely to arise in the implementation of new literacy strategies. An important consideration here was the significance of English in this context. A comparative look at bilingual Lesotho was intended to gauge whether 'one practice fits all'.

4.3 THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

My research questions are directly related to my three aims.

4.3.1 RQ1: *Is the NBTL initiative in its present state likely to address the current backwardness in literacy levels?*

4.3.2 RQ2: *Are there identifiable skills in the practices therein that could be transferred to the successful learning of English?*

4.3.3 RQ3: *What are the factors that are likely to militate against the success of the initiative?*

4.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

It was important for me to find a suitable definition for the term ‘methodology’. Silverman (2000:79) is of the view that a methodology defines how one will go about studying any phenomenon. Neuman (2000:63) suggests research methodology is what makes social science scientific. According to Delanty and Strydom (2003:4) the word ‘methodology’ implies a systematic investigation of the various rational and procedural principles and processes which guide scientific inquiry. Neuman (2000:65) outlines three different approaches, positivist social science, interpretive social science and critical social science. He suggests that these can be used to observe, measure and understand social reality (ibid.). The discussion of two of these approaches is meant to give the reader a better insight to my preferred choice of methodology.

Neuman (2000:66) postulates that positivist researchers prefer precise quantitative data and often use experiments, surveys and statistics. The positivists assume that everyone shares the same meaning system and that we all experience the world in the same way (ibid.). This implies a concern for figures and applications which can be used to predict general patterns of human activity (ibid.). This view is echoed by Delanty and Strydom (2003:13) who assert that there is a basic unity to human experience and that we are therefore able to gain knowledge of that reality. For this reason therefore, I opted for the interpretative approach because I wanted to seek opinions and perceptions that one cannot easily get from statistical data.

The interpretative approach suggests that people may or may not experience social or physical reality in the same way (Neuman, 2000:72). The purposes of interpretative research are argued by Silverman (2000:63). He contends that a purely inductive approach can be blind to the need to build cumulative bodies of knowledge (ibid.). My research questions as I have stated them may not be seen to lead to an interpretative approach. This is because interpretative research is interested in capturing and understanding people’s opinions and interpretations, not in asking whether those opinions are ‘correct’. The design of my research instruments and my use of qualitative analysis, however, follows the interpretative approach.

Neuman (2000:87) advises that there is no single, absolutely correct approach to social science research. People behave in response to what they think is happening or what they think other people think. That is why we need to understand their opinions of the world, not whether those opinions represent an objective reality. That is why I used an interpretive approach for my study. In the present case, data were gathered from existing documents, interviews with field workers, a discussion with teachers and a series of classroom observations. The use of categories and dimensions in the analysis of these data is an attempt to present these factual accounts and opinions in terms that could be generalised.

4.4.1 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Given my adoption of an interpretative paradigm, I chose a qualitative approach to investigate the NBTL initiative in Zambia. Qualitative research is predominantly small-

scale research where data are not recorded numerically (Neuman, 2000). I considered it the best way for me to examine a range of perceptions and opinions. These were collected from two interviews and a focus group discussion. It was also useful in helping me to describe the classroom interactions I observed in the light of some of the stated perceptions.

Corbin and Strauss (1990:17) suggest qualitative research is any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedure or other means of quantification. However, Silverman (2000:91) suggests that the issues of reliability and validity are nevertheless critical and should be considered in the early stages of designing a methodology. The responses of my interviewees and focus group discussants are my main sources of data. Although I cannot guarantee reliability of these responses, I have to accept them as a credible account. There are two issues of credibility with respect to these persons. One refers to the 'office' they hold that places them in a credible position. The other refers specifically to the derived data that was presented in the official documents. The assumption is that the documents are reliable and valid because they have been presented in an official capacity. Stronger arguments to support this are discussed later in **4.7: Issues of Reliability and Validity**.

I acknowledge that I could have employed several other approaches. For instance, an ethnographic approach would have possibly yielded richer and more significant data. Robinson-Pant (2001:pp152-153) suggests an ethnographic approach that gives a critical insight to a researcher investigating a literacy practice or literacies. I concur with the view that ethnographic studies are more likely to be helpful when investigating how children learn. However, this would have required significant resources which were not at my disposal. As a self sponsored, part-time student it would have meant getting unpaid leave for the duration of the ethnographic study. It would have also meant incurring costs that related to accommodation and travel. I acknowledge that I was not in a financial position to do so.

Once I selected my topic it was also necessary to seek a flexible and practical approach. Neuman (2000:63) suggests qualitative research has rich data that can offer the opportunity to change focus as the ongoing analysis suggests. It is worthy of note, however, that unless you have the resources for a big team of researchers, depth rather than breadth is what characterises a good research proposal (Silverman, 2000:64). Therefore, bearing in mind the limitations presented by qualitative research I proceeded to conduct my study.

4.5 SAMPLING AND ACCESS

4.5.1 ACCESS

When I made an initial approach to the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC), my intention was just to find out whether they would be willing to support a private enquiry into the new initiative. I did not expect to get the overwhelming support that ensued.

I introduced myself as a part-time student with the University of Bath and expressed my interest in the NBTL programme. The lead adviser invited me to interview him and his colleague straight away. Thereafter, I was invited to join a government delegation from the Republic of South Africa that was in the country to observe the pilot programme at

work in selected schools. This ten-day programme gave me easy access to institutions that were piloting the programme. It also enabled me to access official documents related to the initiative. However, it also placed restrictions on my choice of population.

4.5.2 SAMPLING

Oppenheim (1992:40) postulates that most populations are structured in some way; or, could be divided into sub-sections according to certain characteristics; that is, they can be clustered. For my interview I drew my sample from Lesotho and Zambia. I used a purposive sample. Therefore, I interviewed field workers, responsible for monitoring the programme in both countries. The responses from my interviews form a large part of my findings. I acknowledge that other opinions other than the ones I sought would have helped to given my study a broader perspective. However, I am confident this is a representative sample. This is because the lead advisers who are responsible for the successful implementation of the initiative might have access to the information I needed. Goodwin and Goodwin (1996:27) acknowledge that while there are numerous ways to select a sample from the population, the researcher's main concern is to select a sample that is as representative as possible. I am confident that although I only conducted two interviews, the three interviewees gave me useful accounts.

A focus group discussion was held with teachers from the three schools after my classroom observations. The sample population had to be as representative as possible in order for one to be able to say that the results are not just peculiar to the specific schools. One might argue that the participants could have been selected on the basis that they could espouse institutional views. This is because the schools were pre-selected by The Curriculum Development Centre. Although I do not know for sure what criteria were used to select this sample, the fact that the teachers were selected from the three different schools offers me a varied sample. Therefore this sample could be viewed as representative of those three schools in at least a limited sense. The five factors that are outlined in my analytical frameworks are a direct consequence of this focus group discussion (**See Chapter Five: Analysis**).

I acknowledge limitations in my choice of population for my observations. My population was pre-determined. This was part of a scheduled tour (a pre-arranged observation visit for South African government officials) and the particular schools had been identified earlier. The organisation of the trip meant that I had to confine my study somewhat to the selected schools. Unfortunately plans to visit other geographical areas were shelved and I conducted my observations in the same geographical area. There were four classes of thirty children. Bryman (2001:168) warns that it is possible that the organisations to which access is secured may not be representative of the population of appropriate ones.

I acknowledge this total may not be considered truly representative of a pilot population of about 800 schools. A wider selection of schools in different geographical areas might have given a broader representation of community languages. However, I had the opportunity to visit three different schools and observe all the three steps in the NBTL initiative at work in four different classrooms. These observations were therefore somewhat representative of the programme in as far as this study goes.

4.6 METHODS

It is important to follow up this discussion with an account of the various methods I used to collect the data I needed. Israel (1972:3) suggests research methods are the methods used by researchers in a field to provide knowledge of the phenomena under investigation. This is supported by Silverman (2000:79) who asserts that techniques are more or less useful, depending on their fit with the theories and methodologies being used. It was important for me to ensure that I collected the data that would yield useful results and generate useful findings.

I will now proceed to discuss the methods I used to collect the necessary data.

4.6.1 THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

My first data-collecting instrument was my interview schedule. I chose the interview method because I wanted 'person to person' contact. This meant I could get detailed explanations and be able to challenge and ask for further detail and clarification, which was the best way to collect the information I needed. Fielding and Gilbert (2000:4) argue that the insights these qualitative interviews give can be much deeper than those offered by standardized quantitative interviews. Oppenheim (1992:102) argues that interviews offer the opportunity to correct misunderstandings and to carry out observations and ratings while controlling for incompleteness and for answering sequence. Denzin and Lincoln (1994:367) support the establishment of some rapport with respondents. Building on this, Kvale (1996:46) views the research interview as a conversation. These views were helpful in guiding me in my interactions with the interviewees. I conducted face-to-face interviews and took notes during the interviews, which I transcribed later.

I conducted two interviews. The first interview was in Lusaka, Zambia and involved two respondents. The two interviewees were working in partnership to oversee the successful implementation of the NBTL initiative. It was important to interview the two respondents as they were likely to provide me with the information I needed. I expected my interviewees to provide me with data based on their knowledge of the operations of the NBTL and total reliability. The literature I read about the initiative in a local publication gave me the necessary background and overview about the initiative. It also spurred my keen interest in the initiative as I have always concerned myself with literacy in this context. My interview schedule had 12 direct questions which needed direct answers (See Appendix A: Interview Schedule). My first question on the schedule, Question 1, which asked about the background, was the icebreaker.

The information that I had derived from the literature I came across was helpful in providing some background information. I started off with some positive questions that could stimulate the interest of my respondents. Although my questions were presented in a specific sequence, it became necessary to adjust some as the interview progressed. My questions sought specific answers to the specific questions stated as my research questions. For instance, Questions 2, 3, 8 and 9 were designed to specifically answer Research Question 1. Questions 4, 5 and 6 were designed to answer Research Question 2. Questions 10 and 11 were designed to answer Research Question 3. There were some instances where an answer presented the necessary flow and I adjusted the sequence a bit. Kvale (1996:132) advises the interviewer to sense the immediate meaning of an answer and the horizon of possible meanings that it opens up. For instance, the answer

to Question 8 was very long and actually run into my answer for Question 9. Therefore I could accept this as an answer for Question 9.

I acknowledge limitations in my construction of my interview schedule because it was not piloted. However, I am fairly confident that the interview schedule is a valid document. I designed it and it measures what I intended it to measure (See Appendix A: Interview Schedule). I also designed my schedule in such a way that the 'sensitive' questions were right at the end. That is why I made the final question on the schedule, Question 12, a negative one. Furthermore, the interview in Zambia was conducted in a Resource Room in the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC). This was an ideal setting for the interview because my respondents were able to draw my attention to several things they referred to in the interview. For instance, they were able to show me copies of official documents like the Baseline Study (Kelly, 1999). Goodwin and Goodwin (1996:29) stress the usefulness of selecting a site that is likely to yield rich material pertinent to the general topic of interest. The interview lasted one hour, thirty minutes (See Appendix A: Interview Schedule).

The second interview was conducted in Maseru, Lesotho with only one respondent. This interview was as a result of some background information obtained in Zambia. I learnt that a similar initiative to NBTL was in practice in Lesotho, Southern Africa. It was therefore convenient for me to pursue this because I was teaching in Lesotho. I conducted the interview with a Ministry of Education official who was directly responsible for the implementation of BTL in this context. My Lesotho interviewee had agreed to the interview on condition that he saw the questions beforehand. This prepared him well for the interview. I say this because he responded in great detail. In contrast Kvale (1996:113) argues that withholding the specific purpose of a study might be useful in obtaining the interviewee's natural views on a topic to avoid the lead to specific answers (*ibid.*). In this instance, I needed specific answers to specific questions. The interview took place in a private office in the Ministry of Education. The interview lasted slightly over two hours (See Appendix B: Interview Schedule).

This interview conducted in Lesotho benefited from my interview experience in Lusaka, Zambia. I discussed the questions beforehand with a critical friend because I was more conscious of cultural sensitivities in this context. The reader will find that the Lesotho schedule has similar questions to the Zambian one but they are fewer. This is because the questioning therein is premised on a clearer understanding of the BTL initiatives. Therefore I was able to structure some questions based on some aspects of what I had seen in Zambia. This is because I was able to build on the questions I had asked in Zambia. Therefore, although I asked fewer questions (nine as opposed to the twelve I asked in Zambia), I was still able to derive significant detail from my respondent. The detail from this interview might be presumed to be insignificant. However, it is significant because the Zambian interviewees had suggested that the Lesotho model was one of the determining factors in their choice of BTL. It is also significant because it represents a Sub-Saharan context.

4.6.2 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

The focus group discussion presented another perspective to the study. This is supported by Kvale (1996:132) who alerts us to the range of possible perspectives that are likely to arise from these interactions. Bryman (2001:336) suggests the original idea

for the focus group-the focused interview- was that people who were known to have had a certain experience could be interviewed. Discussions with practising teachers who have been trained in the new strategies were therefore likely to be helpful in the context of this study. I chose the focus group discussion because I wanted a group perspective. My interest was not in what individual teachers thought. However, it needs to be recognised that some members might try and dominate the discussion and yet have the least to contribute in terms of value. Kvale (1996:101) suggests the interaction might be a relatively chaotic way to collect data. My focus group discussion was lively but it was orderly and purposeful.

Although I conducted the study alongside the South African delegation I had been invited to join, I was the sole interviewer in the focus group discussion. This group of nine participants and a delegated official from the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) were present as observers. The focus group discussion was held with fourteen, focus group discussants drawn from three different schools. I took down field notes to record the focus group interactions for my own purposes. I acknowledge the limitations of not using a recording device. This is because data that are recorded can be easily verified by another researcher. Another factor is recording yields transcripts which can be analysed further for more data. However, using a recording device could present its own limitations. Arnold, Barlett and Hill (2001:43) alert us to the negative effects that recording may have on the participants. They suggest that researchers compare notes to reach some sort of consensus as another valid way of ensuring correctness in the absence of a recording device (ibid: 42). I did not do this but I took deliberate care to write down all the substantive points.

4.6.3 OBSERVATIONS

I also collected some data by observing four classroom settings. I observed two initial literacy classes (Grade 1 level) with pupil totals of 30 each. I then observed a follow on Grade 2 level class with 30 pupils. Thereafter I observed a Grade 5 level class with 30 pupils. These classes were representative of the steps being followed in the NBTL in the particular schools. The classrooms observed were assigned by the Curriculum Development Centre. There were two observers assigned to each classroom. I conducted my observations independently. My observations in each classroom lasted two hours and will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

The nature of different investigations determines what data are needed and how they will be derived. Arnold et al. (2001:46) suggest the use of observation schedules to deal with the basic categories first. In the case of my study, I needed a pre-determined observation schedule to avoid distraction. Bryman (2001:160) suggests structured observation is a technique in which the researcher employs explicitly formulated rules for the observation and recording of behaviour. I opted for a structured schedule that enabled me to focus on my main areas of interest. In particular, I wanted to observe the elements that had been highlighted in the interviews for purposes of triangulation. Arnold et al. (2001:29) suggest the use of structured observations for less experienced researchers. A similar observation is made by Bryman (2001:173). During these observation periods, I used a simple classroom observation schedule that seeks to assess the teacher interaction with the pupils (See Appendix D: Observation Schedule).

This observation schedule was based on the items that were highlighted in my interview in reference to the new teaching methodology. They related to some of the practices that had been highlighted as having positive effects on learning. Therefore I wanted to critically observe the teacher skills in the classroom context. My observation provided a useful form of triangulation in this context as the classroom observations were concerned with data gathered from the interviews. The selection of items on the schedule relates very closely to opinions expressed by the interviewees. I devised the items that were directly or closely related to classroom management techniques. The use of ticks in the appropriate box made it easier to record the events. It also allowed me sufficient time to observe the classroom interactions because I did not have to take down copious notes. I indicated very simple categories on a scale of 1 to 7 (1 being low and 7 being high). I marked the schedule as the lesson progressed (See Appendices E, F, G and H: Observation Schedules).

Arnold et al. (2001:32) alert us to the importance of recording observations. These views were helpful in the context of this study. I recorded my observations using a simple checklist. I then developed this checklist into a summary. This is presented within the text for each of the four classroom observations (**See Chapter 5: Data Analysis**). The purpose of this summary was to help in presenting the actual classroom context to the reader. Arnold et al. (2001:32), however, alert us to issues of subjectivity when researchers select what to write down. However, it was important for me to maintain a specific focus in my observations. My schedule was supposed to act as a guide and allow me an opportunity to write an account of the proceedings to triangulate my interviews thereafter. Bryman (2001:170) acknowledges that the presence of an adult, known or un-known, may present an element of distraction. I tried to ensure that my presence in the classrooms did not have any significant effect on the classroom interaction.

Bryman (2001:163) alerts us to the fact that observations are likely to yield a lot of data. However, the use of a schedule was for a specific purpose. My interest in carrying out the classroom observations was determined by the interview responses. My observation schedule had statements that were directed at classroom procedure (See Appendix D: Observation Schedule). I wanted to use a pre-determined observation schedule to triangulate what the interviewees had told me. Therefore I was not likely to gather unnecessary data. However, it might be argued that this may place limitations on the data collection instrument. Therefore, my pre-determined schedule was likely to place restrictions on my observations. This was, however, helpful in helping me to remain focussed on my research aims.

Bryman (2001:173) suggests that structured observation is a method that works best when accompanied by other methods since it can rarely provide reason for observed patterns of behaviour. The classroom observations were not employed in isolation. They were used alongside my focus group discussion and the interviews.

I carried out structured observations in three schools.

4.7 ISSUES OF RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Determining and establishing ‘truth’ in qualitative research is debatable. Bryman, (2001:65) suggests the interpretative perspective is that ‘reality is not out there’ but in

the minds of people. Huberman and Miles (2002:41) are of the view that it is possible for there to be different equally valid accounts from different perspectives. These are guiding principles in my discussion. I will begin by discussing issues of reliability and validity in relation to my interviews. Thereafter I will discuss the same issues in relation to my classroom observations and focus group discussion.

4.7.1 THE INTERVIEW

In ensuring that my interview was going to serve the purpose of my study I needed to ensure its 'validity' and 'reliability'. Issues of validity and reliability are not easily separable and therefore I will deal with reliability under validity. Oppenheim (1992:160) states: "In principle validity indicates the degree to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to or intended to measure." Building on this Bryman (2001) argues that the issue of measurement validity has to do with whether a measure of concept really measures that concept. Silverman (2000:175) defines validity as truth. I will therefore consider the validity and reliability of my interviews from these perspectives. Sufficient efforts were made to iron out researcher effects.

The nature of the investigation in Zambia was such that I did not have time to engage a critical friend who might have been able to advise me. In ensuring validity, Oppenheim (1992:109) suggests we give due consideration to respondents by ensuring interesting questions dealing with the topic of study. My first interview schedule had twelve questions. The second one had nine. My interview questions were designed to provide useful answers to my research questions. This helped to illustrate the validity of my interview schedule. My questions were in a specific sequence but it became necessary to adjust the sequence as the interviews progressed. I did not see this as a deterrent because the numbering was done solely to guide the interview (See Appendices A and B: Interview Schedules). My respondents in both countries did not need to be prodded. They were enthusiastic and animated throughout the interviews.

In Zambia, I acknowledge how a situation presented itself where the officials suggested I interview them immediately. I responded based on the fact that I saw this as an opportunity and did not have the presence of mind at that time to decline. Declining, however, might have ensured better preparedness for the researcher and the interviewees. On the other hand, I believed at the time that a similar opportunity might not present itself. This is because in this cultural context, obtaining an interview or access to government institutions can be hindered by stringent and tiresome bureaucratic procedures. It is also not uncommon for small time researchers to be viewed as time wasters or with suspicion. The stakeholders I interviewed accorded me an audience because I presented as a credible researcher. I introduced myself as a part-time student who was interested in the initiative as a Zambian and as a student. They were able to give me data availed to them by their current positions which I captured as reliably as I could.

In presenting my interview data, I do so because I believe my interviewees gave me detailed and consistent data which could be verified. For instance, they alluded to the new teaching methodology and how it had improved classroom management. This was something that I could observe in the classroom observations. It is, however, likely that some detail garnered from my Zambian interviewees could have been understated. Their responses might have been compromised by a possible lack of preparedness for the

interview on the particular day. For instance, when I sought clarification about the transfer of skills, which is important to the success of the initiative, my Zambian respondents were not able to clearly articulate what skills could be transferred. On the other hand, the Lesotho respondent was able to describe what could be identified as an effective skills building strategy. These issues will be discussed in greater depth in my Findings Chapter. One consideration here is that perhaps my Zambian interviewees may not have been as sufficiently or adequately prepared for the interview as they had intimated.

Reliability, however, is a difficult concept to prove in the context of this study. In fact the concept of reliability does not sit easily within the interpretative paradigm. However, the notion of triangulation might give a sense of the reliability of my findings. Silverman (2000:177) suggests 'respondent validation', going back to the subjects with our tentative results to refine them. In the context of my study I returned to Zambia with my written account of the interview to verify the detail with the interviewees. It was important to seek agreement with the interviewees over the notes as it is possible to jump to easy conclusions just because there is some evidence that seems to lead in an interesting direction (ibid.:178). I must acknowledge here that I met only with one of the two I had interviewed. One of them was unavailable upon my return to Zambia. The interviewee I met with agreed that my notes were a correct record of what was discussed. Oppenheim (1992:159) postulates that reliability means consistency. Given that the field officer was in agreement with the content in the interview, my interview can be described as reliable. Unfortunately I was not able to return to Lesotho to seek a further audience with my interviewee due to financial constraints.

4.7.2 CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

McCall (1984 cited in Bryman, 2001:168) gives a very strong endorsement for structured observation but acknowledges that there are several issues of reliability and validity that confront practitioners of the method. Bryman (2001:169) refers to issues of replication and triangulation as factors that must be addressed in ensuring the reliability of the measuring instrument. However, he also acknowledges reliability may be difficult to achieve on occasions, because of the effects of such factors as observer fatigue and lapses in attention (ibid.). My study did not warrant long periods of observation. The actual programme lasted ten working days. It entailed visiting several sections in the school but specific classroom observations lasted two hours. I carried out four classroom observations; each on a separate day. My observations were intended as a measure of triangulation for my interviews in Zambia.

4.7.3 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

The role of the focus group discussants was to provide information on account of their practical experiences. This group perspective was useful in evaluating the initiative. My discussants were teachers who are directly involved in the implementation of the initiative. Therefore they could provide specific information which I needed to gauge the effectiveness of the programme. I needed to gather information that would give me a general overview. It was assumed that in outlining some of the teaching techniques, they would provide accurate information. This is because it was not possible in the context to have everything described in detail.

The issue of credibility arises here. The views expressed by my focus group discussants may be considered reliable and valid on account of the credibility of their 'office'. These views could also be checked against observable reality, particularly as I had the opportunity to observe some classrooms. This is because my structured observations were designed to give a factual account of the interactions in the classrooms. A further factor is that the discussants were representative of three different schools. Therefore their expressed views could be challenged or supported by the group.

4.8 TRIANGULATION

However, it becomes difficult to base conclusions on a mere interview. That is why I used the observation method to assist in making my findings more conclusive. Kvale (1996:219) observes that triangulation means the same phenomenon is investigated from different angles, including different methods to determine its precise meaning and validity. In the absence of triangulation, reliability and validity cannot be assured. There is supporting evidence in the practices I observed to support data evidenced in my interview responses. This adds validity to my study. For instance, the interviewees referred to the new teaching methodology as making significant impact through the use of Group Work and other related activities. For example, discussing and sharing ideas in groups was highlighted as presenting opportunities for leadership and co-operation. I was able to observe Group Work and the different activities serving some of these purposes. The data derived will hopefully be a sufficient measure of the diverse skills that may be promoted in this learning situation.

The use of secondary data was a useful form of triangulation. The careful examination of documents was useful in supporting assertions that the initiative had recorded successes. The Baseline Study (Kelly, 1999) was presented alongside the results of a follow up Study in 2002. Data were mostly quantitative. These data represented what was described as the 'unqualified success' of the new interventions (See Appendix A: Answer to Question 8). It was necessary for me to resort to the use of secondary data, as I could not have conducted a similar study to derive my own data. Fielding and Gilbert (2000:4) advocate the use of secondary data. They argue that often it is cheaper to analyse data which has already been collected. For instance, the Baseline Study (1999:3) which used a purposeful selection of schools, followed by random sampling of classes and with classes, random sampling of pupils, warranted a large scale study.

In supporting the use of secondary data, Arnold et al. (2001:21) suggest that the researcher should ask questions, compare figures and try to assess reliability. In the present case, these data were useful in supporting statements in the interviews that highlighted the success of the initiative. Furthermore, the documentary evidence supporting some of the information given to me in the interviews might be accepted as reliable and valid on account of the credibility of the office that produced it. However, although it may have been convenient for me to use these secondary data, I was not able to ask direct questions to obtain direct answers. This is because I did not meet any of the key researchers in both studies.

4.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

I could not guarantee my respondents total anonymity. This is because once my study has been published it will be accessible to a lot of people. The fact that I have

highlighted the topic and context means that anyone with sufficient interest can delve deeper. However, I could assure them of total confidentiality. I would not refer to them by name and none of their responses would be traced back to them. Reference is made to the initiative but no reference is made to individual respondents or schools. In my analysis of subsequent data, I shall not refer to any respondent by name nor will the results of this study be disclosed in a manner that may be injurious to individual participants or schools. Kvale (1996:114) supports the need for confidentiality.

The active use of school children in a study such as this might be questioned in a western context. However, it must be stated that in this cultural context, it is not yet necessary to seek parental consent. A researcher may carry out classroom observations for as long as they have the official authority from the Ministry of Education. In this context, the Ministry of Education had already sanctioned the visit of the South African visitors. This is one of the reasons why I saw my invitation to join the group as a rare opportunity. I was presented with an opportunity in that I did not need to write and seek permission from the Ministry of Education, which is the usual practice. For this reason I am aware that my respondents in Zambia might be disciplined if it were established that I did not go through the normal channels.

As a very experienced classroom practitioner, I was keen not to allow my professional judgement to cloud my classroom observations. That is why I used a structured observation schedule in my observations.

4.10 LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH METHOD

I acknowledge that there are many limitations in my methodology.

I decided to use a variety of methods as part of a qualitative approach because I felt the four methods could be used to complement each other and increase the reliability and validity of my study. I acknowledge that other methods could have been appropriate to generate similar data. However, I used measures I thought were most applicable in my specific environment. I conducted two guided interviews with three field workers. Although my interview sample was small, my respondents gave me very detailed answers. My interviewees in both contexts were keen and showed a clear understanding of my questions and did not require any probing. They also demonstrated a very good understanding of BTL. At the time I believed these responses were a sufficient source of data.

I was very fortunate in carrying out the study in Zambia when I did. An opportunity to conduct a study presented itself and made gaining institutional access very easy for me. I was availed of transport and the opportunity to interact with a lot of interesting people. The costs I incurred were negligible. However, these advantages at the time, presented several difficulties in the later part of the study. Despite the many advantages identified, there are many limitations inherent in such a situation. This is because despite the responsiveness of my population, I had limited control over the research process in certain respects. I acknowledge this as a severe limitation.

In Zambia, I did not really conduct the study in the way I would have preferred to due to the pre-determined scheduling. For instance, I would have liked to observe classrooms over a longer period of time. I would have also liked to follow up the focus group

discussion with personal interviews. I should have also pursued a senior authority to clarify the statements postulated by the interviewees regarding the language policy issues. This would have helped to further validate some of the interview responses. This might have also been useful in seeking an official perspective on sustainability issues.

Furthermore, an inquiry into parental perspectives might have been useful in gathering views to triangulate what had been presented in the interviews and focus group discussion. For instance, it would have been helpful to gauge parental support for the indigenous language initiatives in view of the multilingual context and the significance of English. It is for this reason that I would recommend to any researcher that perhaps for something as significant as a thesis, the researcher should critically assess what may be perceived as an opportunity. It is important to consider that what might present as an advantage at a particular time might have implications at a later stage.

4.11 CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER 4

In this chapter I have discussed my choice of methodology and the different instruments I used to gather the data I required. I have shown how my choice of methodology was useful in helping me to generate the data I needed. I have also discussed how I conducted my interviews, focus group discussion and my classroom observations. I have then discussed how using mixed methods was useful for purposes of triangulation.

Having considered such matters in Chapter 4, I will now go on to discuss my data analysis.

Chapter 5

5.0 ANALYSIS

5.1 INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER 5

This chapter is a discussion of my data analysis. It discusses the different methods I used to analyse my data. It also presents the findings of my focus group discussion and my classroom observations. These findings will, however, be discussed in greater depth in the next chapter.

5.2 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

In the context of this study it was important for me to find out how the practices used therein might reverse the backwardness in literacy. Therefore, it was important to analyse my interview responses, focus group discussion and classroom observations. I used qualitative analysis because I wanted to get an in-depth understanding of the different perceptions. Doing a qualitative analysis enabled me to explore and investigate my data deeply. I was able to uncover what might lie behind the expressed opinions. For instance, there were a number of views expressed in my focus discussion that needed to be explored further. Corbin and Strauss (1990:19) contend that qualitative methods can be used to uncover and understand what lies behind any phenomenon about which little is yet known.

Kvale (1996:187) provides us with an overview of analyses that can be used to organise texts, condense meaning and work out implicit meanings. I devised my own analytical patterns to break wholes into smaller parts. This was helpful in understanding the factors identified in the focus group discussion. For instance, responses from the focus group were coded into categories. These categories were defined and classified as themes. For example, the category, *Resources*, embodied everything that was discussed in relation to resources. These categories were then divided into properties. In order to understand the properties better, I dimensionalised them to try and reveal their relevance based on the emphasis that was placed on them in the course of the discussion. These could only be revealed through what Kvale (1996:42) credits as the openness of qualitative diversity.

Establishing the relevance and significance was useful in interpreting the responses. The categorisation of meaning made it possible to isolate the different themes that arose from the discussion. For instance, my focus group discussants had referred to the issue of *resources*. Therefore, I was able to use their views to examine the relevance and significance of resources in the effective and efficient delivery of the NBTL initiative. Categorisation also helped to ensure a measure of internal reliability because I could compare and contrast the consistency of some views. Categorisation was also useful in triangulating some of the views expressed in my interviews. Silverman (2000) advises the utilisation of these theoretical resources in the deep analysis of small bodies of publicly shareable data.

The summaries of the significant features in my classroom observations sought to give the reader an in-depth understanding about the instruction that was taking place. They were also useful in determining whether the practices therein were as the interviewees and focus group discussants had stated.

5.3 ISSUES OF SUBJECTIVITY AND BIAS

It was necessary to ensure the integrity of my reproduced notes so that they may be considered an adequate representation of what was discussed. My interviews and focus group discussion were not recorded. Silverman (2000:149) supports the use of tapes because they are a public record, available to the scientific community in a way field notes are not. The implication here is that the recording may be easier to verify. My written texts are a correct statement of what was discussed in as far as I can tell. I went further and verified my interview in Zambia with one of the respondents. My interview data were verified based on this official source. It is clear in this instance that I had captured the views reliably. The procedures used in my analysis of data are also meant to ensure a level of objectivity.

My written interpretations also needed to be viewed as an objective account. Thus it was important to ensure that my written accounts were not judged as being open to researcher bias. Denzin and Lincoln (1994:469) argue that there can never be a final accurate representation of what was meant or said, only different textual representations of different experiences. Kvale (1996:135) suggests the degree of interpretation may involve merely rephrasing an answer, or attempts at clarification. Building on this Silverman (2000:163) postulates that every transcription from one context to another involves a series of judgements and decisions. In this instance the employment of analytical methods was useful. I used various methods to break down whole sentences. Once these sentences had been reduced to words and phrases, I was then able to determine the significance of the utterances and group them into themes.

In analysing my data I have drawn on Corbin and Strauss (1990:81) to undertake as sophisticated a content analysis as possible. The Straussian view suggests each of us brings to the analysis of data our biases, assumptions, patterns of thinking and knowledge gained from experience and reading. Huberman and Miles (2002:125) recognise that some biases can be traced to a particular evaluator's background knowledge, prior experience, emotional makeup, or world view. These views alert us to the fact that our own perceptions might be sufficiently entrenched to block what might be significant in our data. In Zambia it is generally assumed that government practices are not in line with stated principles. This is summed up by the assertion that little real progress has been made in changing the nature and thrust of what was and what continues to be given (Kelly, 1999).

My main objective in the analysis of these data has been to pursue a perspective that is open-minded. I will try not to draw on my extensive professional experiences as a teacher. I will refer to my survey of literature to broaden my perspectives so that I can reflect as objectively as possible on the data that has been presented to me. This view is supported by Denzin (1997:31) who contends that a stable external social reality can be recorded by a stable, objective, scientific observer. He alerts us to the interpretive, mobile consciousness of the researcher-as-observer to form certain and conclusive observations (ibid.). Bryman (2001:179) argues that the appropriate use of any

qualitative method and the careful analysis of the data it generates can also be described as systematic and objective. I am in full support of these views. I believe that an ethical researcher can gather data and present credible findings.

A further view is that data should not be analysed but rather the researcher's task is to gather the data and present them in such a manner that the informants speak for themselves (Denzin, 1997:21). I am of the view that the significance of research does not lie in the mere reproduction and presentation of facts but in the interpretation. The purpose of this particular investigation is to evaluate the current NBTL initiative and therefore I need to uncover and reveal some aspects that may not be obvious to the reader. I hope my analysis of these data, which derives from an in-depth interpretation, will be able to give a clearer meaning than mere descriptions or narratives would have done.

5.4 ISSUES OF LANGUAGE

Language is an important consideration when qualitative data have to be analysed. Therefore certain factors had to be considered in my analysis of data. Kvale (1996:43) acknowledges that it has been rare in the social sciences for interview researchers to analyse the research medium they use as tools for and objects of their research. Denzin and Lincoln (1994:371) acknowledge that the use of language and specific terms is very important for creating a shared-ness of meaning in which both interviewer and respondent understand the contextual nature of the interview. It was therefore important for me to consider this issue in the context I am writing in.

This is in particular recognition of the emerging variant of English, popularly referred to as Zam-English (Zambian English), which I have referred to in an earlier chapter (Chapter 3:Literature Review). Corbin and Strauss (1990:81) alert us to the fact that we often assign meanings to words, derived from common usage or experience. Certain phrases and sentences were of particular importance as some meanings of words and phrases over the years have been culturally contextualised. For instance, in most indigenous languages, an adult is often referred to in the plural form to denote respect. Therefore the literal translation of the adult 'he' is 'they'. When one says, "They are calling you," one is referring to an adult. These variants are a direct consequence of mother tongue interference and the different experiences in education.

Another example is the wrong interpretation of idioms. One often hears people use the phrase, 'a sight for sore eyes' in reference to a pile of rubbish. This is a clear misinterpretation as the phrase denotes the opposite in Standard British English. Another example is the popular phrase "I am fed up" to mean I have had enough to eat. This phrase may be comprehensible to most Zambians but has a totally different meaning in British English. Corbin and Strauss (1990:84) suggest we validate possible meanings during interactions with the speakers or train ourselves to ask what meanings the various analytically salient terms have for our respondents. Being a Zambian national placed me at a certain advantage in that I am familiar with some of the 'non standard' forms of the language.

5.5 ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEW DATA

I analysed two interviews. My first interview with two respondents was in Lusaka, Zambia. My second interview was in Maseru, Lesotho. My three interviewees represented the education ministries responsible for policy and implementation of BTL in both contexts. My questions were already set out in a particular order and I wrote down the answers during the course of the interviews. I took care to write down the substance of all that was said in the discussions. It was important for me to try and present as accurate an account as is possible based on the facts as they were represented to me. My data is primarily focussed on my interviewees' representation of facts. The entire texts were typed out in the evening following the interview and are presented as Appendix A and Appendix B.

Huberman et al. (2002:128) are of the belief that events without concrete supporting examples are less likely to find their way into reports. However, where these have been included in this study, I have acknowledged the absence of supporting evidence. It was important for me to include these answers in my findings as they formed a central part of my investigation. For instance, my interviewees in Zambia suggested that the lawmakers in Zambia are opposed to the new initiative. My focus group discussants expressed the view that parents are in support of the new initiative. However, there was no substantive evidence of this opposition or support. There are other answers to my questions that are not supported by documentary evidence. Huberman et al. (2002:130) allude to this as 'unreliability of data'. I am, however, confident that the data I generated are as reliable as possible. These are discussed under issues of reliability and validity in an earlier chapter (Chapter 4: Methodology).

It was therefore crucial that my interviews were well documented and presented. Therefore, I attempted to present the facts as they were given to me by reporting the speech that occurred. In analysing my interviews, I had to present a written interpretation of the interview. It is this content that I proceeded to analyse. Therefore, although some information in the interviews is not fully substantiated (I say this because there is no further data to support it) it is important for me to accept this as a reliable account of the interviewees' perceptions. This is because at the time the study was conducted the interviewees spoke in their official capacities, presumably with sufficient knowledge and authority.

I was also able to triangulate some data from my interview with my secondary data and classroom observations to establish some of the facts. Therefore for the purposes of this study, I would like to consider my interviewees as reliable and valid sources of data. Furthermore, it is important to consider that the printed text normally follows the laws of syntax, which are alien to speech (Kvale, 1996:42). I have gone further and verified the account of the interview I conducted in Zambia. I did this by showing one of the interviewees my written notes from the interview. These facts were confirmed as a true record of our discussion. However, I acknowledge that further information from parents and lawmakers would have been helpful.

5.6 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

The focus group discussion was important to me, as I wanted to get an in-depth understanding of the group perspective. The discussion was not recorded. I

acknowledge that this might be a shortcoming. The process involved taking down notes during the discussion and writing them out was not easy. I tried as much as possible to write down everything that was said and my interpretation is based on this ordinary talk (See Appendix C: Field Notes). This turned out to be slightly more difficult with a focus group. This is because I tried to write the substance of everything that was said during the discussion (See Appendix C: Field Notes).

Suffice it to say, in this situation most participants took a while to articulate a supporting sentence or statement and the speed of the interaction could be considered manageable. Great care had to be taken to type the field notes later in the evening. I used a variety of techniques to investigate the meaning and context of some of the key utterances in my analysis. The use of illustrations in the form of diagrams was helpful in representing the identified themes (See Appendices I, J, K, L and M). These views articulated by the focus group discussants are presented in table form in the text. These analyses are accompanied by a written explanation to give the reader a better understanding.

5.6.1 ANALYSIS OF FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION DATA

The purpose of the focus group discussion was to reveal the attitudes, views and perceptions held by the group. The discussion was in English. I decided to focus the analysis on certain words, phrases and generalisations. This is because some utterances were given significance in the discussion. Although a word may have several definitions, I have opted for terms that relate directly to my identified themes. In view of this particular second language learning context, I have also made reference to particular phrases which may have the features of mother tongue interference (direct translation from the indigenous language to English). This is particularly important because what I have presented is largely summarised. Some of the utterances may also be judged to be grammatically inaccurate in relation to Standard English conventions (British and American).

5.6.2 THE USE OF CATEGORIES

Corbin and Strauss (1990:92) assert that using a variety of techniques allows for the exploration of numerous avenues of thought and hopefully gives new insights into the problem. They suggest developing categories in terms of their properties and dimensions (ibid.:69). There were five related concepts which I recognised as essential factors in my focus discussions. The categories I identified were: ***Resources, Group Activities, Innovations, Learning and Achievements***. I recorded them as five separate categories. These categories were useful in revealing clusters of perceptions and the underlying values of the group.

Silverman (2000) advises researchers to be careful how they use categories as it may deflect attention from uncategorised activities. Kvale (1996:190) suggests eliminating superfluous material such as digressions and repetitions, distinguishing between the essential and the non-essential. It was important for me to highlight current perspectives on some phenomena articulated by the teachers. For example, teachers had the opportunity to elaborate on features of child centred methodology and comment on its contribution to pupil co-operation and collaboration. Dimensionalising the categories helped to show the value and significance to the effectiveness of the initiative.

The process of categorisation was significant in my analysis. Although I was not faced with a large amount of data it was hoped that the use of categories would reveal clusters of attitudes and the underlying perceptions. In supporting the use of categories, Kvale (1996:4) asserts that the understanding of a text takes place through a process in which the meaning of the separate parts is determined by the global meaning of the text as it is anticipated. Thus Corbin and Strauss (1990:83) make a useful observation when they advise that the use of these techniques should never be confused with data as they are only hypothetical possibilities that must always be supported by actual data.

During the focus group discussion some pertinent issues arose. The five major ideas or themes generated from the discussion have been placed into five categories (See Appendices I, J, K, L and M: Diagrams). I reduced the sentences to key words and phrases without changing the context of the utterance. Most of the terms I have used to label my categories could be described as ‘summative’ terms derived from my data in the process of my analysis. I found it helpful to use diagrams because an illustrated diagram may be easier to interpret. Diagrams to represent the five identified themes are presented as separate appendices (See Appendices I, J, K, L and M: Diagrams). For instance, the issue of *resources* and the practical limitations it presented made it a recurrent feature in the discussion. Therefore it became necessary to view it as a pertinent issue which needed further consideration.

Each category is centred and the properties are projected from this centre. These diagrams are supported by tables in the text that dimensionalise this significant detail. A table for each diagram has been drawn to incorporate the category, properties and dimensions. A similar table will be produced in respect of all the five ideas that are indicated in my categories. I used four questions arising from the dimensions concerning each framework to see what was emerging, whether it was conclusive or interim and the likely implications. Asking these questions helped to give my interpretations greater meaning. I acknowledge that this idea of sole interpretation might raise questions about the validity of my answers. However, as a sole researcher it was entirely dependent on me to interrogate my own data and make the necessary deductions.

5.6.3 PRESENTATION OF FOCUS GROUP DATA

The answers to these questions were useful in understanding the dimensions which are presented in table form. Questions 1, 2 and 3 of each diagram are addressed immediately in the course of the analysis. However, the answers to Question 4 of each table will be presented in my findings. I opted for this procedure because I wanted to make the process of analysis very clear to the reader. The questions will be presented as follows: Question 1: **“What is emerging?”** This question seeks to find out the idea that is coming out of the framework. For instance, in the case of Diagram 1 which depicts **RESOURCES**, we want to find out what has been brought out by the discussion.

It is followed by Question 2, which states: **“Is it conclusive?”** Conclusive here questions whether the evidence or supposition is without doubt and may suggest a state of finality or permanency. Question 3, asks, **“Is it interim?”** In this particular instance we question whether this is a temporary or final state. Question 2 and 3 are also likely to serve as a measure of internal consistency on the part of the sole researcher. This is because they may be seen as ‘equal opposites’.

Question 4 seeks to consider the likely consequences. It states: “**What are the implications?**” The same questions are replicated for each category throughout the analyses. I was then able to proceed with my analysis.

5.6.4 CATEGORY A: DIAGRAM ONE

My first identified concept was **RESOURCES**. My concern was to establish whether resources are likely to make the NBTL more effective and efficient.

This is presented in DIAGRAM 1 (See Appendix I: Diagram One). My objective was to find out to what extent resources may be considered necessary for the successful implementation of the programme. I devised four properties to help me in the further interrogation of my data. I considered the following elements: The **RELEVANCE, ADEQUACY, AVAILABILITY and SIGNIFICANCE** of the property. I then proceeded to dimensionalise each of these. RELEVANCE had the dimensions of use and value. ADEQUACY had the dimensions of quantity and quality. AVAILABILITY had the dimension of accessibility and SIGNIFICANCE had the dimension of appropriateness and necessity (See table 5:1 below).

TABLE 5:1

Category	Properties	Dimensions	
RESOURCES	Relevance	use	value
	Adequacy	quantity	quality
	Significance	value	degree
	Availability	accessibility	

DIAGRAM 1

The sentence I have used from the focus discussion is the following: “**We definitely need a lot of resources.**” This statement is revealing. Therefore in this category, in relation to Question 1, a dependency on **RESOURCES** as a means to an end was emerging (See Appendix I: Diagram One). In relation to Question 2, I had to consider

whether it is conclusive that this necessity had been established and is likely to determine the success of the programme or affect it in any way. This led to further questions.

- a) Was there the belief that as long as this condition was fulfilled the programme would be effective?
- b) Was it a temporary setback?

As regards Question 3, as to whether this is interim, I referred to Question 2. The guiding statement I used to inform my answers to both Question 2 and Question 3, therefore, was the sentence: **“We are sure the government will do something about this.”** This indicated their confidence in the government's commitment to the programme. This is therefore viewed as a temporary setback. This may be attributed to their previous experience and the renewed show of interest by government in their work.

Question 4 sought to consider the following:

- 1) Is the implication here that the programme can not be effective without these resources?
- 2) Should the programme continue without these resources?
- 3) What can be achieved without these resources?

The answer to Question 4 as indicated earlier will form part of the Findings Chapter.

5.6.5 CATEGORY B: DIAGRAM TWO

This represents the teaching methodology being utilised. This idea relates to **Group Centred Activities** and the perceived impact it may have on learning. 5 properties emerged: **personal development of the child, cultural development of the child, enabling environment, relevance and significance of diverse skills, significance of developing leadership skills.** The issue of values was implicit in the properties identified. These values were perceived to be a direct consequence of the new methodology. These properties were then dimensionalised (See Table 5:2 below).

TABLE 5:2

Category	Properties	Dimensions	
Group Centred Activities	Personal Development Of child	The contribution to individual ability to adjust and adapt	Development of confidence in learners
	Cultural Development Of child	The development and awareness (degree of) tolerance	Cultural literacy
	Enabling environment	Promotion of conducive attitudes in classroom environment and improved relations in school community (community ethos)	Intercultural understanding promotes international understanding
	Relevance and significance of diverse skills	Development of social skills (co-operation) Better assimilation of knowledge of material (collaboration)	Promotion of life-long learning
	Significance of developing leadership skills	Signs of empathy in peer relationships	Increased discipline
	Individual development	Pastoral care	

The statement I used to inform my thinking is quoted from the focus group discussions: **“Children have adapted well and are working very well together”.**

The group centred activities were recognised as essential for giving close attention to small groups. They were seen as promoting a conducive and enabling classroom environment. Support was also given for the new seating arrangements. This was viewed as progressive and considered necessary in an enabling environment. Discussants were of the view that learners were able to share more ideas and information. However, what is also significant here is the reference to the inadequacy of resources although resources constitute a separate category.

In relation to Group Centred Activities, according to Question 1, what was emerging was a very positive disposition in the group. This is made explicit in the properties I have outlined from the discussion (See Appendix J: Diagram Two). The group referred to the personal, social and cultural development of the individual child being reinforced by knowledge and skills acquired through close peer interaction. These were portrayed as significant factors. Several of these could be substantiated in the context of this study. The properties revealed that group work is seen to encourage a spirit of co-operation, competitiveness and collaboration. In my dimensions, the perception that this new methodology has improved learners' attitudes to work is revealed.

However, skills that may facilitate the transfer of skills acquired in initial literacy to the learning of English could not easily be quantified or identified. The discussion, however, acknowledged the limitations in this learning approach. The recognition that this has not been sufficiently addressed is reflected in the sentence: **“Some of the things, we will continue to improve them in the long run.”** (See Appendix C: Field notes) The use of the word ‘improve’ here and the subsequent wording may indicate some limitations in methodology. This alludes to some level of success but suggests there is room for improvement. What is emerging here is that there may be some practical difficulties in implementation.

This assertion is more pronounced in relation to the theoretical views expressed by the interviewees (See Appendix A: Question 1). The views attributed to Kanyika (2000, cited in Kelly, 2002) that describe the NBTL as an unqualified success might also be a bit exaggerated. The phrase **“In the long run”** from my original sentence: **“Some of the things, we will continue to improve them in the long run”** may be helpful here. “In the long run” denotes a passage or movement of time. It indicates the intention to improve the existing situation. Whatever constraints are being experienced are perceived as interim and the general perception is one of optimism.

5.6.6 CATEGORY 3: DIAGRAM 3

The third category identified was **Innovations** in direct relation to curriculum (See Appendix K: Diagram Three). Five properties emerged from the analysis. These properties were perceived as a direct and positive consequence of NBTL. These were: **child centred approach, transfer of BTL to other curriculum areas, bilingual literacy development problem solving approach, improved classroom management.** These relate specifically to classroom organisation and classroom management. These were then dimensionalised as follows: (See Table 5:3 below).

TABLE 5:3

Category	Properties	Dimension
Curriculum	Child-centred approach	focus – considered appropriate
	Transfer of BTL methodology to other areas of curriculum	proposed and seen as practical
	Problem solving Approach	certain levels of efficiency
	Bilingual Literacy Development	Seen as effective and viable
	Improved classroom management	Improved tone Discipline brought about by shared values

The sentence that highlights this is quoted from the focus group discussion: **“Classroom management has been improved with bilingual literacy development as the teacher can resort to the L1 if the child does not understand.”**(See Appendix C: Field Notes). Therefore in relation to Question 1, what is emerging is that these innovations in the vernacular are perceived to have improved classroom management and pupil attitudes to learning (See Appendix K: Diagram Three). Thus improved tone and discipline in the classes is seen as contributing to levels of achievement.

In trying to find out whether this is interim, I relied on the group discussion, which determined that children are more inclined to be imaginative and creative in a familiar language. Discussants believed that learners’ attitudes and behaviour may have also improved with new teaching practices that engage them individually and collectively (See Appendix K: Diagram Three). Pupil numbers in the pilot programmes were also significantly smaller and resources that are unavailable in other government schools were available. A worthy consideration here is whether pupil attitudes may have improved with increased access to resources and motivated teachers.

In relation to Question 3, as to whether this is conclusive, I referred to the focus group discussion statement: **“The child centred approach focuses on the child and is appropriate. In future we might see a situation where we will say that Zambia benefited from NBTL.”** (See Appendix C: Field Notes) The perception is that this methodology is considered the best. It is seen as an appropriate tool for effective classroom management. Therefore it is likely to remain a major focus (See Appendix K: Diagram Three).

5.6.7 CATEGORY 4: DIAGRAM FOUR

The fourth category refers to **Learning**. 6 properties emerged from my analysis. It was clear some essential values are seen as being promoted here. The qualities in the

dimensions identified all refer to an element of acquisition. These are: **essential skills building, exposure to world knowledge, social development of the child, reinforcement of cultures, exposure to cultural world, cultural development to enable one to cope globally** (See Table 5:4 below).

TABLE 5:4

Category	Properties	Dimensions
Learning	Essential skills building	Competence
	Exposure to cultural world	Considering to what degree learners can be considered culturally literate
	Social development of the child	Perceptions about tolerance and understanding
	Exposure to world knowledge	Adequacy of type of education in a global context
	Cultural development to enable one to cope globally	The necessary global knowledge and skills
	Reinforcement of cultures	The compatibility of individual culture and community ethos

The statement I have used to analyse this category is: **“We want the children to develop into world citizens.”** (See Appendix C: Field Notes) What is emerging here is the belief that essential skills are being sought and acquired through the NBTL programme. The desired values were identified as follows: the need to acquire knowledge, skills, world culture and social development. So the new literacy initiatives are not only seen as a vehicle for literacy but also as a form of cultural literacy.

As to whether this is interim, the practitioners attributed the ‘backwardness in literacy’ to the existing language policy (The language of instruction is ‘still officially English’). They stated: **“We found the state of affairs to be totally unacceptable.”** (See Appendix C: Field Notes) This professes a strong belief that language skills must be acquired in the local language in order to accelerate progress in English language learning. There is also a belief that the NBTL is likely to equip learners with desirable attributes in relation to the theoretical frameworks of functional, cultural and critical literacies.

As to whether this is viewed as conclusive, it is important to stress that the discussants spoke in unison in support of the programme. The statement: **“Have you seen?”** (See Appendix C: Field Notes) may not be patently clear to someone outside this context but it is an emotive overture used to express indignation. In raising this question, the speaker attempted to make a visceral representation of the purported damage English had inflicted on Zambians. Therefore, “Have you seen?” is meant to imply “Do you understand or do you appreciate the extent of the problem?” (See Appendix C: Field Notes)

Both assertions do not, however, consider the fact that the local languages remain ‘inferior’ in status to English, which is an ‘international’ language. The discussants were of the view NBTL is sufficient to equip learners with intercultural learning and understanding. They also believe this language learning exposes the child to the world. Notwithstanding, both interviewees and focus group discussants seem positive about improved literacy levels and they see the current backwardness as interim. What is quite conclusive is that the lack of capacity in the area of literacy is attributed to English. This was emphasised by the conclusive statement: **“The only vehicle available for literacy is NBTL.”** (See Appendix C: Field Notes and Appendix L: Diagram Four).

5.6.8 CATEGORY 5: DIAGRAM FIVE

The fifth category identified was in relation to **Achievements**. It highlighted accomplishments since the inception of the programme. Five properties emerged here; **successful learning, motivated teachers, improved enrolment figures, improved attendance, supportive parents and communities**. These were then dimensionalised as follows.

TABLE 5:5

Category	Properties	Dimensions
Achievements	Successful learning	Adequacy and quality of Provision, Preparation
	Improved enrolment figures	Smaller class sizes, Better school environment (determining factors)
	Improved attendance	Punctuality And regularity
	Supportive parents and communities	Perceived attitudes opinions (concerns)
	Motivated teachers	Improved remuneration, Training opportunities and staff relations

Diagram 5 (See Appendix M: Diagram Five) sums up what may be considered the overall views of the group. This diagram sought to highlight the achievements of the NBTL. What was emerging here was the perceived overall success of the programme. Academic achievements were significant as were strengthened peer relationships and caring attitudes exhibited by the children.

The discussants also alluded to support from the parents and community. In the absence of data to support this, however, it becomes difficult to determine the extent of support from the parents and the communities. A number of parental and community perspectives could have been investigated: For instance, the parental determinants for choice of school and whether parents are acquainted with the schools' academic standing. Another area of interest would be whether parents understand and appreciate the child centred aims. Therefore it is difficult to categorise this support as interim or conclusive because there was no material evidence of this during my study.

Discussants alluded to improved punctuality and attendance levels among the student body. However, it was difficult to assess the credibility of reports that punctuality and attendance have improved because there were no registers that could be used to compare current figures with past figures. It was also suggested that teachers are motivated and successful learning is taking place. These issues will be discussed further in the next chapter.

However, what could be deemed as conclusive is the support for the programme by the discussants. The pilot schools have experienced 'face-lifts' (improved infrastructure;

classrooms have been painted). They have received several material resources and their initiatives are being lauded and publicised in the media. Schools have received frequent visits from officials and the teachers have been promised increased remuneration. They acknowledged support from the government and were happy with it. This is evident in the statement: **“We appreciate what the government is doing”**. (See Appendix C: Field Notes)

The discussants extended their support for the programme by stating: **“We are pleased that our friends are planning to introduce NBTL”**. (See Appendix C: Field Notes) This was in reference to other schools taking up the programme, particularly the South African delegates, who had come specifically to see NBTL in action.

5.7 CLASSROOM OBSERVATION DATA

5.7.1 PILOT PROGRAMMES IN THE VERNACULAR: CHINYANJA

I visited three schools and observed four lessons. I observed the following lessons in NBTL. The first visit was to a Grade 1 class where the lesson was in the indigenous language. This is the first step in the initiative. My second visit was to a Grade 2 class in the same school. The lesson was in English, referred to as Step into English (SITE). Thereafter, I visited a Grade 5 class in a different school. I observed an English lesson, referred to as Read on Course (ROC) meant for Grade 3 to 7. My last visit was to another Grade 1 class to observe the first step in the initiative. I visited two initial literacy classes because it had been stated that all the preparatory skills were acquired at this level of the initiative. Therefore it was important for me to critically observe two classes.

In this study, I have not referred to participating schools, teachers or learners by name. No individual has been identified. This use of pseudonyms for the schools is often seen as an important ethical consideration. What I have been able to do is surmise that the children, of mixed sex were between 7 and 9 years old in Grade 1, 8 to 9 in Grade 2 and perhaps 12 to 13 in Grade 5. This is because there is a minimum age requirement at Grade 1 entry in government schools (age 7) but there is no age restriction. The community schools which are viewed as an outreach programme are even more fluid.

In my observations I concentrated on the discourse. My classroom observations were guided by an observation schedule (See Appendix D: Observation Schedule). I devised a schedule that served as a checklist for my own purposes. This is because I wanted to focus on these particular areas of classroom management and organisation (See Appendices E, F, G and H: Observation Schedules). A written summary of each checklist is presented in the text.

5.7.2 SCHOOL VISIT ONE: THE B O C S

The first school visited was The B O C S of Lusaka, Zambia. As a community school, it differs from the regular or mainstream school in that it has combined age groups to cover the usual grade 1 to 7 syllabus. Level 2 comprises Grade 1 and 2; level three comprises grades 3 and 4; level 3 comprises grades 5 and 6 and level 4 comprises grade 7. Community schools get a small grant from the government (a small allocation of books etc.) but they supplement this with income generating activities. They also get

some funding from external well-wishers. This specific school had a production unit and a piggery.

The purpose of these schools is two-fold. They cater for the special needs of some children in the community and they also provide early intervention for vulnerable children who are likely to end up on the city streets, by integrating them and removing them from the streets. The caregivers also give support to households and encourage them to look after orphans. The combination of children with special needs is meant to improve and encourage socialisation skills. Life skills and religious activities are two important components of the curriculum. The home based educational programmes are for the benefit of families; they teach parents to support new curriculum initiatives and the caregivers evaluate activities after a week to help the children.

5.7.3 CLASSROOM VISIT ONE

The focus group discussants had alluded to innovations in the initiative that were perceived to have improved classroom management and pupil attitudes to learning. Thus it was significant for me to critically observe whether the use of the indigenous language could be credited with the improved tone and discipline in the classes and whether it could be seen as contributing to levels of achievement. As this was an initial literacy class, I was also keen to observe whether there were any skills that were being acquired in the indigenous language that could be transferred to the next stage in the initiative (See Appendix E: Classroom Visit One).

The first lesson I observed under the NBTL was of a Level 1 class at the school. The children were of a range of age 6 to 10. The lesson was conducted in the ‘Language of Play’ (Chinyanja). It was a two hour long literacy lesson. The teacher began by reading a story to the whole class. She asked questions as she read the passage and followed this up with more questions. The children sat attentively and my assumption is that the children shared a similar level of comprehension of the vernacular language.

Thereafter the children were divided into four ability groups and while one group did the ‘teacher centred activity’, the other 3 groups did related language activities. In this particular class, one group was ‘word-building’, one was ‘reading, writing and drawing’ and the other one was ‘silent reading’. The classroom was well displayed with several visual aids to support learning. Phonic charts were prominent on display. I present one example of such a phonic list below. The words in use were ‘corrupted’ forms of Standard English.

‘Corrupted’ Term	Standard English
basi	bus
bedi	bed
bisiketi	biscuit
bola	ball
buku	book

5.7.4 CLASSROOM VISIT TWO

The next class I visited was a Level 2 class, 'Step In to English' (SITE). At this level it is expected that the children should now be able to acquire the same competencies that they have attained in the Language of Play or L1.

The theme was 'At the bus station'. At this stage in the initiative, the lesson should have been an English one. Although the teacher did attempt to elicit responses in English, the discussion was mainly in the indigenous language, Chinyanja. The lesson was a Reading Lesson. According to the lesson plan the children were to be engaged in a language and picture discussion. Group activities were then assigned.

The teacher centred activity was a further picture discussion. One group did a phonic activity while another group did a handwriting activity. The fourth group 'read' in a corner. I put 'read' in inverted commas because the children were not able to read the English texts in the corner (See Appendix F: Classroom Visit Two). The group work was well organised. This aspect was of particular interest to me because group work was highlighted as a progressive approach to teaching and learning in the interview and focus group discussion.

5.7.5 SCHOOL VISIT TWO: O B S: READ ON PROGRAMME (ROC) CLASSROOM VISIT THREE

O B S is referred to as a basic school. It runs from grade 1 to grade 9. The basic school system has been in existence since 1996 when the government, in line with its policy of giving universal education to all, implemented this initiative with the help of donor funding and community initiatives. The Read on Course (ROC) is an accelerated reading programme that aims to harness the basic skills and then develop them to make the children independent and fluent readers in English. At this school I observed a grade five literacy lesson in progress. The duration was two hours and the stated objectives were that Pupils Should Be Able To (P.S.B.A.T.) write plural forms and a story of their own choice.

It was group centred work and the teacher read the story and the pictures were discussed to encourage vocabulary extension. The activities were differentiated. Group 1 were doing spelling and plurals, group 2 were in the reading corner and then doing word-building using plurals, group 3 were doing story writing and reading comprehension, group 4 were doing phonics and spelling. The resources used were the Grade 5 English, ZBEC Part 2, Word-cards and story books.

I asked the children in the reading corner to read to me. This particular group had enjoyed the full benefit of the programme as they started it in Grade 1. All the children in the group were able to read their assigned lines. The reading was bland and without expression. However, most words were read correctly and the only glaring mispronunciation was of the word, 'tortoise'. It was pronounced 'toy-toys'. It must, however, be noted that this is a common "Zambian" way of pronouncing the word.

5.7.6 SCHOOL VISIT THREE: CLASSROOM VISIT FOUR

I observed another Grade 1 class. The lesson was in Chinyanja (indigenous language) and group activities had been arranged. The children were called to the mat in groups

and this was heralded by song and dance. The vocabulary for the day was intended for a mapping exercise. The indigenous language is in the left column while the Standard English version is translated on the right. See below.

Atate	dad
Cona	cat
Zobvala	clothes
Madzi	water
Ambuya	gran
Capa	cup

The teacher read the story to the class and then asked questions. The pictorial discussion was lively and so was the atmosphere. There were some good visual aids. There were colourful pictures adorning the classroom walls with the related vocabulary. The teacher centred activity was a discussion of a phonic chart which was pictorial. The pupils had to name objects and other things that begin with the C sound.

Ca pronounced cha	Ca for cakudya (food)
Ce pronounced che	
Co	co for cona (cat); co for cola (cough)
Ci	
Cu	

There were some lively responses. For instance, the children came up with commonly used terms to refer to candle (candulo), coat (cotti) and fritters (citumbuwa). There was also a set of vocabulary cards (Set 2 Core vocabulary sentences)

1) Amai acapa zobvala ndi sopo
2) Amai ali kucapa zobvala ndi madzi
3) Atate ndi ambuya ali kunyumba

I noticed that most forms of the language on the vocabulary charts and cards have been corrupted from English, e.g. ‘sopo’ is soap.

Emphasis was on the sentence of the day ‘Cona ali kusewera’, ‘The cat is playing’. The group activities were as follows, Group 1 were doing the teacher centred activity and followed on with sentence writing. Group 2 were in the library corner and then went on to do the teacher centred activity. Group 3 did word matching and then handwriting (the letter ‘c’). Group 4 were doing handwriting, the letter ‘c’ and then word matching. The children were divided into rotating ability groups which depend largely on individual pupil progress.

It was interesting to watch the children participating in the teacher centred activity. Their familiarity with the language appeared to spur their participation. This may be because they were fairly comfortable with the language. Unfortunately I was not able to determine which children were first language speakers of the indigenous language in use. This would have helped to establish whether familiarity with the language is as a result of their exposure to it in the community as the initiative suggests.

5.8 GRID OF POPULATION

TABLE 5:6

Interview in Lusaka	Two respondents	Curriculum Development Centre	Zambia
Interview in Maseru	One Respondent	Ministry of Education	Lesotho
Classroom Visit One	Approx.30 students and 1 teacher	School One	Zambia
Classroom Visit Two	Approx. 30 students and 1 teacher	School One	Zambia
Classroom Visit Three	Approx. 30 students and 1 teacher	School Two	Zambia
Classroom Visit Four	30 students and 1 teacher	School Three	Zambia
Focus Group Discussion	14 Teachers 10 Participant Observers	School Three	Zambia

5.9 CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER 5

In this chapter, I have presented and analysed data gathered from my focus group discussion and classroom observations. Some factors identified in the focus group were supported by some evidence in my classroom observations. This was also helpful in validating my interview data. For instance, the successes of child centred activities involving group work were lauded by my interviewees and focus group discussants alike. Therefore, it was important for me to observe the practices in some lessons.

I acknowledge limitations in my analysis of data. This is because my classroom observations were conducted over a brief period of time. However, what I can usefully say is what I observed. What I have done is to present my data as I saw it in my classroom observations. For instance, by observing classroom practice I can tell whether the children are indeed doing group work by gauging their familiarity with the routines.

I have also presented a grid of my population.

Having discussed these issues, I will now go on to discuss my findings in my next chapter.

Chapter Six

6.0 FINDINGS

6.1 INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER 6

In the following discussion, I will be addressing the research aims because they are more broadly stated. My main sources of data were the interview in Zambia, the classroom observations and my focus group discussion. However, I also collected interview data from Lesotho, a neighbouring country, which has a similar literacy initiative. This is because my Zambian interviewees referred to BTL in this context as a 'successful model'. Therefore there are instances where I have referred to Lesotho alongside my findings in Zambia. I acknowledge severe limitations in my findings.

6.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

My research questions are directly related to my three aims. In addressing the aims, I will also be answering the research questions.

6.2.1 RQ1: *Is the NBTL initiative in its present state likely to address the current backwardness in literacy levels?*

6.2.2 RQ2: *Are there identifiable skills in the practices therein that could be transferred to the successful learning of English?*

6.2.3 RQ3: *What are the factors that are likely to militate against the success of the initiative?*

6.3 FINDINGS FOR AIM ONE

6.3.1 INTRODUCTION

The first aim sought to look critically at the NBTL and examine its usefulness as a literacy practice. I wanted to find out to what extent the intended use of the indigenous languages in initial literacy is likely to address the current backwardness in literacy levels in this multilingual context.

My findings for this aim are derived from my interview data, focus group discussion and classroom observations. I will begin by considering the practices as discussed by my two interviewees in Zambia. I will then consider the perspectives of the fourteen focus group discussants and the classroom practices I observed in four classrooms, each with a total of 30 children.

6.3.2 TEACHING METHODOLOGY: USING GROUP WORK

The new teaching methodology (child centred approach using group work) had been identified as an effective strategy in NBTL. The interviewees attributed the success of

the initiative to the new teaching methodology and classroom management strategies. They stated: **“The child centred methodology and classroom management has been a key strategy of the initiative. Its impact is very significant.”** (See Appendix A: Answer to Question 6) The focus group discussants also alluded to the success of the new methodology. They said, **“The child centred approach focuses on the child and is appropriate.”** (See Appendix C: Field Note D)

The focus group discussants identified group centred activities as a crucial determinant to the effectiveness of the NBTL (Appendix K: Diagram Three). The focus discussants suggested group work activities had created an enabling environment. They asserted that diverse skills were acquired from group work. For instance, they referred to the development of leadership skills (See Appendix C: Field Note D). My classroom observations gave me an opportunity to observe the teachers and verify these claims. These observations revealed the extent of the teacher/pupil interaction and pupil participation.

The use of group activities was seen as an effective strategy in communicating interest to every learner. The group centred activities were also recognised as essential for giving close attention to small groups. They were seen as promoting a conducive and enabling classroom environment (See Appendix C: Field Note D). Group work was further seen to encourage a spirit of co-operation, competitiveness and collaboration. My focus discussants stated: **“Children have adapted well and are working very well together.”** The focus group discussants were of the view that the new seating arrangements were progressive and learners were able to share more ideas and information.

My focus group discussants also suggested that the new methodology had improved learners’ attitudes to work. Although the general view suggested the learning was successful, some limitations were acknowledged. My interviewees acknowledged some limitations in the programme, notably the absence of structured teaching methods (Appendix A: Question Twelve). The focus group discussants also acknowledged some limitations in the new teaching approach (Appendix C: Field Note D).

I will now discuss my observations in Classroom Visit One in relation to this aspect of group work (See Appendix E: Classroom Visit One).

6.3.2.1 Classroom Visit One

6.3.2.2 Observation

The first lesson I observed under the NBTL was of a Level 1 class. The children were aged between 7 and 9. The lesson was conducted in the indigenous language, Chinyanja. It was a two hour-long literacy lesson. The teacher began by reading a story to the whole class. She asked questions as she read the passage and followed this up with more questions. The learners were attentive and a variety of techniques were applied (See Appendix E: Classroom Visit One).

Thereafter the children were divided into four ability groups and while one group did the ‘teacher centred activity’, the other 3 groups did related language activities. The four groups alternated and did the teacher centred activity each for thirty minutes. In this particular class, group activities involved word-building, reading, writing and drawing

and 'silent reading'. It was interesting to observe this interaction and individual participation. The atmosphere was conducive to learning.

6.3.2.3 *Discussion*

The teacher and pupils I observed in my first classroom visit displayed a clear understanding of the processes of group centred activities. There were clear attempts to involve all the children. What was also evident was the total involvement of pupils in the teacher centred activity. The teacher knew the individual children and valued their responses. The pupils appeared motivated by working in smaller groups and receiving more teacher attention during child centred activities.

The lesson was well managed. The children understood the classroom routines. Instruction was clear and pupil participation was lively. Short visits to the different workstations and brief chats with the learners around the room revealed a range of abilities. The teacher centred activities were, however, more engaging than the other group activities. For instance, in Classroom Visit Four, the handwriting activity was repetitive as the children were required to practise writing the letter 'c' for thirty minutes.

The lesson I observed in this classroom context does not seem to differ from other initiatives in the broader African context. It still presents as an 'exit' programme that allows for socialisation and facilitates transition to the later learning of English (Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995; Alidou, 2009). The successful learning environment in this initial literacy classes could be attributed to the use of a familiar language that facilitated easier communication.

What may be different is the fact that Group Work involves a range of skills that could not easily be deduced from quantitative studies. Street (1994) asserts that literacy can be used to promote values, attitudes and habits, factors that are relevant for the maintenance of social order during social change (ibid.) This is of particular significance in this particular school which is part of a 'social intervention' programme. The Republic of Zambia Ministry of Education document (1996:26) acknowledges the fact that teaching should not only be restricted to a functional ability but should be extended to other aspects.

I will now go on to discuss Classroom Visit Four, which provides a similar classroom context to Classroom Visit One.

6.3.3 CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

My Classroom Visit Four will be discussed immediately after my Classroom Visit One even though my visits were not necessarily in that order. This is because both Classroom One and Classroom Four are the classes using the indigenous language where I wanted to verify what had been suggested as 'improved classroom management' by my interviewees and focus group discussants.

My interviewees had stated: **"The child centred methodology and classroom management has been a key strategy of the initiative."** (See Appendix A: Question 6). My focus discussants had also suggested an improvement in classroom management (See Appendix C: Field Note B). They had further alluded to indigenous language

innovations in the initiative that were perceived to have improved classroom management and pupil attitudes to learning. They stated: **“Classroom management has been improved with bilingual literacy development as the teacher can resort to the L1 if the child does not understand.”**(See Appendix C: Field Note B) Thus it was significant for me to critically observe whether the use of the indigenous language could be credited with the improved tone and discipline in the classes.

A further factor was that the focus group discussants credited the perceived success to the smaller class sizes. They commented on increased attention spans, better behaviour and more purposeful interactions (See Appendix C: Field Notes). The NBTL programmes have been initiated with reduced class sizes so as to increase academic excellence (sizes average 30 whereas classes in the ordinary stream often go up to 60). The general perception is that small classes are more effective learning environments for enhancing student achievement.

6.3.3.1 Classroom Visit Four

6.3.3.2 Observation

The lesson was in the indigenous language, Chinyanja. The children were called to the mat in their groups. This was heralded by song and dance. Although it was clear the children enjoyed this opening to the lesson they quickly settled down. The teacher then read a story to the class and thereafter asked questions. The pictorial discussion was lively. Purposeful engagement with all the students was clear in this classroom. Proper classroom routines had been established (See Appendix H: Classroom Visit Four). However, my observation period was too brief to determine how class size and using the indigenous language could be seen as contributing to levels of achievement. What was evident was their contribution to effective classroom management in this particular situation.

6.3.3.3 Discussion

My classroom observation revealed that the teachers demonstrated a fair knowledge of the individual children. This could be as a result of smaller class sizes and the result of closer pupil/teacher interaction that small groups may provide. Secondly, the children behaved as responsible members of their groups. The group activities were self-supervised as the teacher focussed on one group at a time. Some aspects of the identified frameworks of functional, cultural and critical literacy were evident in this classroom interaction. The functional skills were demonstrated in the learners’ ability to participate actively (Egbo, 2000). The cultural element was made explicit in the communication in the different groups (Foley, 1997). The notion of critical literacies was evidenced in the responsible and active participation of the individuals (Armour, 2001; Street, 2001).

6.3.4 TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE

A further issue for consideration was to what extent teacher professionalism might be supported by the providers of the programme. On the one hand, the Zambian respondents seemed to express satisfaction with the training provided. They stated: **“Teachers were supplied with piloted and field tested materials along with practical training in the use of the materials.”** (See Appendix A: Question Seven). On the other hand, when asked to comment on any challenges they faced, my

interviewees stated: **“The lack of capacity in the area of Literacy and particularly of initial literacy.”** (See Appendix A: Part answer to Question 12). There may be some implications for the programme that my interviewees were not ready to divulge. For instance, in stressing the lack of capacity as being particularly significant in initial literacy, my respondents acknowledged severe limitations. This is because this is the stage at which initial skills to spur development need to be harnessed.

6.3.4.1 Discussion

The teachers I observed and interacted with appeared confident in their indigenous language interactions. However, I was able to observe their use of spoken English in the focus group discussion. Some elements of what I have referred to as Zam-English (Zambian variant of English) in an earlier chapter in this study were evident. For instance, in discussing the achievements, one of my discussants stated: **“Some of the things, we will continue to improve them in the long run.”** I refer to this as a variant of English because in this context, it has been directly translated from an indigenous phrase. This is reflected in the incorrect grammatical structure of the sentence when it is presented in English.

We see here how the likely effects of the L1 may impinge on teacher competence and be manifested in diverse ways. In an Oral Language Survey conducted in the Medical and Educational Trust in Zambia, Johnson (1990:4) blames the decline in the standard of English usage to the arrival in the Trust schools of an increasing number of second language learners. The implication here is that the L2 teachers are seen to have insufficient knowledge of the implications of their L1 on their L2 teaching (ibid.:17). These assertions are supported by the Ministry of Education, which acknowledges many teachers have difficulties with English (Republic of Zambia Ministry of Education, 1996:27).

I acknowledge that seeking the views of the teachers in this regard might have been useful in this context.

6.3.5 MOTIVATION

The teachers I met appeared positive and willing to contribute to the success of the initiative. They described the learning as successful and acknowledged the support of parents and the communities. They also expressed the view that teachers were more motivated with government support (See Appendix C: Field Note E). They stated: **“We appreciate what the government is doing”**. (See Appendix C: Field Note E.) The stated views indicate that the teachers were sufficiently motivated. Herzberg’s two-factor theory assumes that there are a range of positive ‘motivators’ such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement and the work itself (cited in Fidler and Cooper, 1992:15). This view is also supported by studies carried out in Zambia by Machungwa and Schmitt (1983, cited in Mwanalushi, 1992:13). They argue that if human beings are positively motivated they are likely to make a meaningful contribution to the organisation (ibid.). In the present case recognition could be a important motivating factor.

6.3.6 RESOURCES

A consistent finding in this study is that the availability and use of books in the classroom may be seen to raise the levels of learning achievement. My respondents in

both contexts referred to insufficient resources in the indigenous languages. My Zambian respondents said, **“A major challenge has been the untidy nature of the present language of instruction model. Textbooks in Grade 1 and other grades are in English.”** (Appendix A: Question Twelve). They also acknowledged the absence of structured teaching methods and textbooks. (Appendix A: Question Twelve). They referred to this as: **“A clear lack of capacity in the area of literacy and particularly of initial literacy.”** (Appendix A: Question Twelve).

This need for resources was also identified and re-emphasised as an essential requirement in the focus group discussion. They stated: **“We definitely need a lot of resources.”** (Appendix C: Field Note A). The group focussed on the current resources necessary to steer the programme. They suggested a list which included: supplementary readers, visual aids to stimulate discussions, work cards and a variety of workbooks to complement exercises (Appendix C: Field Note A). They were however, confident that the government would find a solution to this problem. This is summed up: **“We are sure the government will do something about this.”**

The lack of resources might also be attributed to the Molteno Project's lack of practical and working experience with the particular indigenous languages. Although it was not stated it was implied that perhaps Molteno was not suitably qualified to assume responsibility for the initiative in both countries without the involvement of local scholars. For instance, my Zambian interviewees stated: **“Some experts behind the programme believed that all material to complement the programme could be achieved through a series of quick workshops and implementation of the programme could be achieved nationwide.”** (Appendix A: part answer to Question Twelve).

6.3.6.1 Discussion

The study further revealed that indigenous language resources are insufficient and inadequate even in a mono-vernacular context like Lesotho (Appendix B: Question Nine). My respondent bemoaned the scarcity of supplementary texts to support reading and the repetitive nature of the syllabus in the three grades (Appendix B: Question Nine). He implied that Molteno has not demonstrated the capacity to go beyond these initial stages in literacy. For instance, he disclosed that the Lesotho government insisted that the original resources from Molteno which had ‘corrupted’ forms be replaced. **“The Basotho insisted that the original materials be adapted to suit their variant of Sesotho: linguistic and cultural context using local experts to avoid RSA corrupted forms.”** (See Appendix B: Question 6).

In Zambia, the resources in use had clear forms of ‘corrupted’ forms of language. My classroom observation (School Visit One: Classroom Visit One) proved this assertion to be correct. This was on account of some words and items on display in the vocabulary lists. For example, the nouns on display were mostly ‘corrupted’ forms. One of these ‘corrupted’ forms was the word, **‘bedi’**. Historically, there were no beds in traditional African society. People referred to ‘a place of rest’, where one could lie down to sleep. In modern day Zambia, we see the common use of beds. Therefore we see the use of the word **‘bedi’**, corrupted from the Standard English form of the word ‘bed’.

The interviewees claimed these corrupted forms are used when the vernacular terms are too difficult for the young children. However, there was no evidence that the corrupted

forms would be replaced with the correct forms at a later stage. The use of borrowed words may be common in most languages but this is worrying in situations where entire words and structures may be totally eclipsed. In this instance, the corrupted forms are part of the length and breadth of the learners' vocabulary. The use of 'corrupted forms of language may also not be suitable in the formal context of NBTL.

Therefore, the issue of resources is likely to have implications for these new initiatives at many different levels. My findings also revealed that both countries depend heavily on external funding for support, training and expertise (Appendix A: Question Twelve and Appendix B: Question Nine.). This factor is critical to recognise because a dependency on external funding is also likely to have its own implications. This view that indigenous languages can be developed if there is effective technical support for their development is acknowledged by Pennycook, 1994; Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995; Brisk, 1998; Kelly, 1999; Brock-Utne, 2000; Hornberger, 2003 and Alidou, 2009.

6.3.7 PARAMETERS FOR SUCCESS

In Zambia, a single developmental test is used. The current tests for Grade 5 literacy and numeracy are meant to gauge how well the overall education system is performing in Zambia as part of a national assessment exercise (Appendix A: Question Five). In 1999, 2001 and 2003 a sample of pupils from 40 randomly selected schools were tested at Grade 5 level in literacy and numeracy. My interviewees stated: **"Overall results showed that pupils at Grade 4 who had started with PRP courses were out performing pupils at Grade 5 level in literacy and numeracy."** (Appendix A: Question Eight).

It is evident that the stakeholders in Zambia considered these and the 2002 test results truly representative and suitable for a national standard of achievement. The stakeholders stated: **"The initial assessment of the NBTL indicated huge gains in learning achievement."** (Appendix A: Question Eight). Although results in the 2002 survey indicate a sharp rise in literacy levels nationwide it is evident that while the children may have reached acceptable levels in the indigenous languages, a similar assertion might not be made about English. I say this because of the lesson I observed in a Grade 5 class. The suggestion by Kelly (2002) that future testing should provide for various levels of feedback would be helpful here.

A further factor is that there may be children who are not mother tongue speakers of the 'community language' (indigenous language of the community). For instance, although the respondents in Zambia acknowledged impressive results nationwide they were more vociferous about the success of a rural pilot programme. They stated: **"It was evaluated by independent consultants as an unqualified success. This was a convincing argument for familiar language literacy."** (See Appendix A: Question Eight). In this particular context, the Bemba people originate from this area. The tribal and community language of the region is predominantly Chibemba. Therefore it is evidently a familiar language. Using Chibemba in initial literacy might be helpful because it is more likely to be reinforced and supported by language and cultural activities in the home and the community (Appendix A: Question 8). A supportive home environment is seen as a critical factor (Lareau, 1997; Kelly, 1999; Robinson-Pant, 2001; Stites, 2001).

The practice of using standardised testing was advocated by the 1999 Baseline Study as the only sure way of knowing whether pupil performance in one year is different from performance in an earlier year by using exactly the same test materials. Graff (1994:154) suggests that such basic but systematic and direct indications meet the canons of accuracy, utility and comparability.

However, Street (1994) questions the value of evidence provided by quantitative studies. Street argues that such evidence places the often-asserted contemporary decline of literacy in a new and distinctive context (ibid.). Based on the nature of evidence in my brief classroom visits I am not qualified to assume a position in relation to the 'success' of NBTL. In this respect, what I can attest to was the integrating and hegemony-creating functions of literacy provision (Street, 1994). This was evident in all the four classrooms that I visited.

Having discussed the findings for the first aim, I will now go on to discuss the findings for the second aim.

6.4 FINDINGS FOR AIM TWO

6.4.1 INTRODUCTION

The second aim sought to examine the practices to find out whether there were identifiable skills acquired in initial literacy in the indigenous languages that could usefully be transferred to the learning of English.

Eminent scholars have argued in favour of the relevance of the L1 and how it is closely associated with competence in the L2 and acquisition of subsequent languages (Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995; Pennycook, 1998; Alexander, 2000; Hornberger, 2003; Baldauf and Kaplan, 2004). Cummins (2001) and Alidou (2009) suggest that the fluency attained in mother tongues should be utilised by teachers. In Zambia, teachers are encouraged to use the local language whenever it benefits learning and understanding (Appendix A: part answer to Question Ten). This was evident in some of my classroom observations as using the indigenous language, Chinyanja, facilitated easier classroom interaction.

6.4.2 TRANSFER OF SKILLS

My observations in Classroom Visit Two (Appendix F) are discussed here. This classroom was supposed to demonstrate how skills that had been acquired in initial literacy (in this case the indigenous language) could be transferred to the learning of English.

6.4.2.1 *Classroom Visit Two*

This lesson was in English and at this level it is expected that the children should now use the acquired skills. The theme was 'At the bus station'. The teacher introduced the lesson by reading the story. She tried to involve the children in a language discussion by asking them questions. The teacher tried to elicit responses from the children but they did not have the language to support the discussion. The teacher then proceeded to discuss '- ed' as a feature of the past tense by asking the learners to repeat after her.

The picture discussion was well intentioned. Many features in the picture lent themselves to verbs in the past tense, adding -'ed' to most of them. For example, a person had 'crossed' a road and the teacher tried to elicit the response that someone had 'crossed' the road. Similarly a minibus had stopped at a 'zebra crossing' and the teacher tried to elicit the response that the bus had stopped. The salient teaching element here was 'past tense' even though it was not expressed at any given point. As the lesson progressed the teacher wrote some -'ed' words on the board. The plenary session did nothing to address this column of words. The children repeated the sentence, 'The bus has stopped' over and over again.

This was because the anticipated answer was, 'The bus has stopped.' A variety of answers and a wider range of vocabulary could have been encouraged and used. For instance, the teacher could have used open-ended questions to elicit interesting responses about the whole picture such as, "What are the people in the picture doing?" Or "Why do you think the bus has stopped?" to which the children might have used their imagination, alluded to their knowledge of 'road safety rules' or known vocabulary to answer the questions. The lacklustre responses indicated that the learners did not have the necessary vocabulary development (See Appendix F: Classroom Visit Two). There was no obvious transfer of skills in this particular situation. There was still a lot of rote learning and memorisation, the same techniques that are credited with crippling creativity and spontaneity in language learning situations (Kelly, 1999). Furthermore, my visit revealed that the children were not able to read the texts they had been given.

In Zambia, the indigenous language readers used in Grade I are reproduced in English for use in Grade 2 (See Appendix A: Question Four). My interviewees and focus group discussants were highly critical of the repetitive nature of the texts. My interviewees stated: **"The same supplementary readers that were used in Grade 1 are now used except they are in English."** (Appendix A: Question 4). What was evident here was that the expectation that learners in this context would be able to read these readers was a misconception. This indicated that memorisation may be seen as crucial to learning. This is because there were no discernible skills in initial literacy that would have enabled the learners to read these books easily. Having read the indigenous language texts earlier, perhaps the expectation was for them to rely on their memories to recall the details of the particular reading text.

My interviewees were not able to demonstrate how the skills in the local language could enable an easy transfer into English. For instance, they stated: **"The strategy at Grade 1 is to fast track reading and writing skills while building up to a level of spoken English that will allow the skills developed in the local language to transfer to English in Grade 2."** (See Appendix A: Question Three). On the other hand, my Lesotho respondent was able to describe how learners are able to construct sentences based on this prior knowledge. He stated: **"If the child already has the concept of the word, the wide use of picture charts in BTL, depicting different local scenarios, e.g. A BOY CROSSING THE STREET, encourages vocabulary discussion, reinforcement and extension."** (See Appendix B: Answer to Question 5).

6.4.2.2 *Classroom Visit Three*

My next observation was in Classroom Visit Three. This was the third step in the programme. The Read on Course (ROC) is an accelerated reading programme that aims

to harness the basic skills and then develop them to make the children independent and fluent readers in English. My interviewees stated: **“This provides for bilingual literacy development and consolidation.”** (See Appendix A: Question 5).

This particular group has had the full benefit of the programme as they started it in Grade 1. Therefore according to the interviewees, this group was supposed to show the ‘unqualified success’ they had alluded to (See Appendix A: Question 5). However, this was not evident in the Grade 5 literacy lesson in progress. The duration of the lesson was two hours. The stated objectives were that ‘The Pupils Should Be Able To’ (P.S.B.A.T.) write plural forms and a story of their own choice. It was group centred work. The teacher read the story and the pictures and vocabulary were discussed. The activities were spelling and plurals, reading, word-building using plurals, story writing and reading comprehension and phonics and spelling. The resources used were the Grade 5 English Textbook (Zambia Basic Education Comprehension Part 2), word-cards and storybooks.

My observation revealed the absence of structured cultural and critical directives in the lesson that could be used to aid the pupils. For instance, in their reading of the text, children demonstrated little understanding of basic vocabulary that they were able to read. Asked to define the meaning of the word ‘deep’, the children were at a complete loss. When I asked them to say the definition in the indigenous language, they used a term that when directly translated into English means ‘tall’. This was likely to present a misunderstanding of the term as a result of the direct translation. This is further demonstrated in the answer to the question, “What lesson did you learn from the story?” The choral response was, “Don’t cheat.” (To infer, do not tell lies.) This answer if translated into most indigenous languages in Zambia would be correct.

This is because in several indigenous languages one word may be used to describe all types of illicit activity (theft, adultery, fraud etc.). This explains why the learners used the word ‘cheat’ in this classroom context to describe what they perceived as dishonest behaviour. So, although this was a fair answer that demonstrated comprehension, it was grammatically wrong according to Standard British conventions. However, it was acceptable in this context. The children’s comprehension and understanding of vocabulary appeared limited. What emerges here is that although the children are acquiring functional skills of reading and to a lesser degree writing in English, critical thinking skills and cultural skills are not being developed to a similar level.

Further probing revealed that the learners were also not able to describe the physical characteristics of the main subject, the tortoise in English. This could be related to the fact that literacy has been separated from language learning in this context. I say this because my observations in this particular instance revealed that children were able to read the text but they did not have the ability to do much else. It is obvious that the traditional view of literacy that refers to the ability to read and write has been achieved in the lesson. Most responses were stilted and grammatically wrong. This could be the result of the misinterpretation of The Curriculum Development Centre’s strategy to de-link the teaching of literacy from languages and make the teaching of literacy separate and deal with it as a subject on its own (Appendix A: Question Two). The cultural and critical skills needed to facilitate active participation were missing. Kelly’s assertions (1999) about the lack of spontaneity and creativeness were apparent here too.

This study also revealed some of the complexities that are likely to arise when it is assumed that English words can easily be translated into the indigenous languages and vice versa. This is because direct or literal translations may alter meaning and context. My interviewees stated: **“Textbooks are in English but teachers are encouraged to use the local language whenever it benefits learning and understanding.”** (See Appendix A: Question 10). A similar view is attributed to Linehan (1999), “Therefore, when students are not able to grasp concepts in English the teachers are encouraged to revert to the indigenous language.” What my interviewees do not acknowledge, however, is that there are several concepts in English that cannot be easily translated to the vernacular and vice versa. What teachers can do is provide limited meaning and understanding for some concepts.

Some literal translations change the whole meaning of what is intended in either language. For instance the displayed sentence, "Amai acapa zobvala ndi sopo" literally translated is 'Mother is washing clothes with soap' (Classroom Visit Four). In this cultural context, a native speaker will comprehend that this 'soap' refers to a washing detergent, in this case 'washing powder' whereas, in the Standard British English context where the word derives from, the word 'soap' may be specific to bath soap. This is because the word 'sopo' in this local context has multiple purposes. Therefore, attempting to use direct translation as an attempt to transfer the functions of one language to another may not always be helpful.

Similarly the sentence "Amai ali kucapa zobvala ndi madzi" means 'Mother is washing clothes with water'. Again this is mutually comprehensible in this context, to imply 'mother is washing with water and washing detergent'. The use of the verb 'kucapa' (washing) in this context denotes the use of the requisite items (washing detergent and water). This gives the sentence a fuller meaning whereas in English it may be sufficient to just say "Mother is washing" to imply the same. We see here how the meaning and context are very likely to differ. This is useful in highlighting that such transfers may serve purposes of mutual comprehension among indigenous speakers but may not fulfil the critical functions in a broader context. In such situations the local interpretation of 'success' may not tie in with the wider global perspectives.

6.4.3 BILINGUALISM

Another important consideration in this context was what may be considered bilingual competence in this multilingual context. This is in view of the bilingual nature of the NBTL. In Zambia, the multiplicity of vernaculars suggests some children possess a mother tongue other than the one used in the indigenous language class. Therefore, a 'double' unfamiliarity with English and the indigenous language may present difficulties for children who are not mother tongue speakers of the community language. My interviewees acknowledged the fact that perhaps the use of 'community' languages could present problems to learners of other indigenous language backgrounds. They stated: **“The Ministry of Education acknowledges that while familiar- language literacy is desirable, mother tongue literacy should be the ultimate goal.”** (See Appendix A: part answer to Question 11).

The issue of 'trilingualism' is an important factor which was not pursued in this context. I acknowledge the limitations that this presents. My interviewees intimated that this may have implications for the initiative when they stated: **“A policy of inclusion is**

likely to face less political opposition.” (See Appendix A: part answer to Question 11) This suggests that there might be some dissatisfaction with the exclusive use of seven indigenous languages. However, it is unlikely that the initiative could be extended beyond the seven languages in use. This is because the NBTL initiative has had to rely on external funding for this purpose. Furthermore, limitations have been acknowledged in the provision of resources for the seven languages. The bilingual component has also been described as inadequate (Appendix A: Question 12)

This study reveals that although Zambia as a society might aspire for additive bilingualism given its second language situation, there are situations that may make it untenable. Cummins (2000:173) suggests that the levels of proficiency that bilingual students attain in their two languages might mediate the consequences of their bilingualism for cognitive and academic development. In Zambia, a ‘lack of capacity’ is acknowledged by the interviewees: **“The major challenge has been the untidy nature of the present language of instruction model.”** (See Appendix A: Question 12). This is despite the fact that my Zambian respondents were of the view that NBTL is a bilingual programme in this wider context (Appendix A: Question Five).

The existence of the shaky nature of this bilingualism and its impact on literacy is critical to recognise as was the mistaken belief that the translation of the vernacular supplementary readers into English gave the study a bilingual component (Appendix A: Question Four). The focus group discussants shared the view that resorting to the vernacular in some instances was an effective strategy in bilingual literacy development (See Appendix C: Field Note B). However, comments attributed to the interviewees suggest a hastened process to achieve bilingualism is in practice. They stated: **“The strategy at Grade 1 is to fast track reading and writing skills while building up to a level of spoken English.”** Therefore, the use of the words ‘fast track’ suggests learners in this context may not easily attain additive bilingualism. This is likely to stifle the desired progression into English and the continued development of the indigenous language.

There may be unintended and undesirable outcomes in the casual approach to indigenous languages in initial literacy. Lightbown and Spada (2006) and Toukomaa (2000) suggest levels of achievement and the circumstances in which each language is learnt are correlated. Although the main intention may be to reverse the current backwardness in literacy levels we have a situation where current literacy programmes in Africa generally and Zambia in particular may be turning out ‘zero-lingualists’ (learners with almost zero mastery of all languages they encounter). This was evident in my Classroom Visit Two (See also my earlier discussion above: Classroom Visit Two). Clearly the children were not able to read the texts in the second step of the initiative. A further factor is the reduced literacy hours as learners move up in the school.

Eminent theorists such as Alexander (2000), Cummins (2000), Baker (2000) and Alidou (2009) alert us to the cognitive and linguistic benefits of additive bilingualism. Therefore, a gradual transition to the official language is recommended by many scholars. Cummins (2000) proposes benefits of the late introduction of English in the school system and suggests a staggered approach. My respondents in Zambia and Lesotho acknowledged the fact that the current educational system does not allow for a smooth transition. Therefore the problem may not be the use of English, a foreign

language, or any particular language for that matter but how literacy programmes are conducted. A parental perspective would have been useful here. This is because they would be better placed as parents to highlight the aspirations they might have for their children and the difficulties they are likely to encounter.

Having discussed these issues, I will now go on to discuss the findings for my third aim.

6.5 FINDINGS FOR AIM THREE

6.5.1 INTRODUCTION

The third aim sought to identify the complexities that are likely to arise in the implementation of new literacy strategies. An important consideration here was the significance of English in this context. A comparative look at bilingual Lesotho was intended to gauge whether ‘one practice fits all’.

6.5.2 POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Zambia is acknowledged to be a multilingual country (Kashina, 1994). The issue of language in Zambia remains a contentious issue due to the multiplicity of indigenous languages. Therefore, English is seen as a unifying factor. My Zambia interviewees acknowledged this factor, **“This has been one major factor for retaining English, a foreign language as the official language of instruction.”** (See Appendix A: part answer to question 11). The historical background to the use of English as a medium of instruction and the social and economic functions of the language continue to make it a dominant language (Kashina, 1994). My interview respondents in Zambia suggested that parents do not believe that vernaculars share the same significance as English in an educational context (Appendix A: Question Nine).

The higher status of English is acknowledged by among others, Phillipson, 1992, Rassool, 2007 and Alidou, 2009. This perceived “superior” status that English commands may also obliterate all the social obstacles in a multilingual context. My respondents disclosed that the official language policy has not changed. They stated that: **“The language of instruction post 1996 is still officially English, but with a directive from the Permanent Secretary to schools that this be an aspiration to be achieved by the end of Grade 4 at a pace that is appropriate to learning needs.”** (Appendix A: Question Ten). My Zambian respondents acknowledged that language is a sensitive issue which needs to be dealt with carefully. My interviewees stated: **“In an area as sensitive as language, where people’s feelings of worth and identity are much enshrined in their native discourse, there is a need to be careful.”**(See Appendix A: part answer to Question Eleven). This view confirms the widely held belief that English is a unifying factor in this context.

In a bilingual situation such as the one that exists in Lesotho, there may be strong arguments for promoting literacy in the mother tongue. (Appendix B: Question Five). Where the L1 is common to all the citizens it may be easier to convince them of the advantages of this initial literacy. However, my Lesotho respondent stated that parents generally believe that acquiring English is more likely to improve their children's welfare (Appendix B: Question Five). This is because English permeates society and is accorded this higher status. For instance, my Lesotho respondent stated: **“Although**

some people see BTL as important in a cultural context, they don't equate this to the educational context that English immediately evokes. English is still supreme."(See Appendix B: Answer to Question Nine). Therefore, even in this context it might not be easy to present a convincing case despite the assurance that English will be introduced in the later years.

A further factor is that in Zambia, my respondents were of the view that parents are more likely to accept English than another indigenous language. They alluded to the opposition from Members of Parliament and stated: **"There has been some opposition from Members of Parliament about this new language policy. They have been convinced that the language policy hasn't changed but the literacy policy is to use whatever oral resources are available to children."** (See Appendix A: part answer to Question Eleven). These expressed views reveal that English is the preferred language and that the concept of indigenous languages in an educational context is a difficult one to grapple with. This shows that there may be no overt conflict between the mother tongue and this second language, English.

The issue of language in this context depends on its importance and relevance in society. Very often the significance of English as the language of academia and international trade tends to dilute the educational value of the local languages (Appendix A: Question 11). These findings in both contexts revealed that political considerations outweigh social considerations in the implementation of major policy issues. We also see a situation where the indigenous languages remain relegated to social functions. It is very unlikely that in a globalised context, where some foreign languages have attained 'international' status, the indigenous African languages will perform anything other than 'subordinate' functions. This is summed up in the statement attributed to my focus group discussants: **"We want the children to develop into world citizens."**(See Appendix C: Field Note C)

6.5.3 SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Different factors may have different implications on different societies or language groups. Social considerations emerged as a major factor here. Unfortunately, the home as a social context was not investigated in the study and a significant amount of data is reliant on the perspectives of the interviewees and my secondary data. The issue of the validity of these data has been dealt with in an earlier chapter (See **Chapter 4: Methodology**).

The purpose of the 1999 Baseline Study was to generate and present comprehensive information on levels of reading achievement (Appendix A: Question 8). The testing occasion was also used to gather information on two areas perceived of as being relevant to children's reading skills, namely parental literacy and the availability of reading materials in the home. The appropriateness of certain social conditions and their implications on literacy levels are evident in the work of Lareau (1997). The view that students' academic performance is likely to be positively affected by parental involvement is acknowledged by Kelly (1999).

Kelly (1999:26) revealed test scores were found to be invariably higher when pupils reported that there were reading materials in the home and if the information from the pupil was that the parents were literate. The National Assessment also found that the

educational level of the mother made a greater impact than that of a father on a child's learning environment (ibid.:28). Lareau (1997) postulates that the home is likely to play a highly significant role in language and cultural transmission. Kelly (1999) suggests the absence of this support for English in several Zambian homes may also be a contributory factor to the current backwardness in literacy. My Lesotho respondent also acknowledged that a poor reading culture has contributed to low literacy reading levels in most local households in Lesotho (See Appendix B: Answer to Question 9).

The recognition that social factors may have such impact on literacy levels is clearly an important consideration for governments in this context.

6.6 CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER 6

In this chapter I have discussed my findings which are based on data gathered from my interviews, focus group discussion and classroom observations. I have also related my findings to those of eminent scholars in the fields of language in education, language policy and literacy. Having considered these matters, I will now go on to discuss my conclusions.

Chapter Seven

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER 7

This study primarily sought to look critically at the policy and practices of the NBTL. NBTL is a pilot programme in 800 government schools nationwide. A further aim sought to investigate whether there were skills acquired in initial literacy that could be transferred to the successful learning of English in later years. Thereafter, the study sought to examine the significance of the official language, English, in this context. Therefore a thorough examination of the current policy, practices and perspectives in the NBTL was useful in informing this conclusion.

7.2 THE STUDY

The study sought to investigate and present findings from qualitative research. The decline in literacy levels in Zambia has long been acknowledged by policy makers. The NBTL pilot programme is meant to address these issues by delivering initial literacy in local languages in Zambia. The Ministry of Education in Zambia sees the NBTL literacy initiative as the solution to the low levels of literacy attainment in schools. It is hoped that some of the principles and practices outlined in the initiative may translate into outcomes. One of the first activities was to establish reliable baseline data against which future gains in literacy could be measured. For this purpose a literacy test was developed for both English and seven Zambian languages. The first tests were administered in 1999. This test was then repeated in 2002.

In this specific context an investigation into a 'literacy practice' was best served by a qualitative approach. My survey of literature was highly selective to choose the most relevant references in the context of this particular study. The use of mixed methods, employing a variety of instruments was useful in gathering data and in triangulation of those data. Data sources included two interviews, a focus group discussion and four classroom observations. Participants in my study were drawn from a broad spectrum in the field of education. I investigated the direct experiences of three field officers and four teachers in four classrooms. Of equal significance were the views and opinions of fourteen focus group discussants. My choice of methodology was helpful in answering the three research questions. Thereafter, data generated from these sources was analysed using a qualitative analysis to uncover deeper meanings.

Language in education and language policy in several African countries is inextricably linked to historical and economic relations they share with their former colonial masters (Barrett, 1994; Kashina, 1994; Baldauf and Kaplan, 2004). We continue to see the perpetuation of the former colonial languages which enjoy a higher status in most post-colonial states (Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995). This higher status may relate directly to the fact that in a globalised context, English and French may seem to have a niche in the global economy and society (Phillipson, 1992; Rassool, 2007). The indigenous languages, though popularly spoken in social circumstances, are most often

relegated to secondary functions (Myers-Scotton, 1993; Barrett, 1994; Kashina, 1994; Musau, 1999). The impact of globalisation and the demands on individuals and societies may have perpetuated the rise of English. In Zambia, speaking English is now synonymous with a feeling of involvement with world culture. The continued use of English at higher levels of education and its usefulness as a vehicle for further advancement make it a desirable language (Kashina, 1994).

There is a significant link between language policy and literacy. This is more pronounced where this relationship depicts literacy as a tool for personal advancement and upward social mobility (Pennycook, 1994; Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995; Rassool, 1999). In the context of this study, there is no overt conflict between the indigenous languages and the official medium of instruction (Blanc and Hamers, 2000). English is accepted as the language of social and academic advancement and, as such, matches the perceived key function of formal education (Kashina, 1994). This may be because of the way that English has been portrayed as the only literacy. Generally Zambians have come to accept English as the higher status language and the language necessary for academic and social progression (Kashina, 1994). In Zambia, English is also seen as a unifying factor. This, coupled with the other factors I have mentioned, is a powerful motivation for the continued use of English. In this context, there is a great social desire to learn English (Kashina, 1994).

A considerable body of research suggests that learners are able to achieve good results when similarities are evident between the home and the school environment (Lareau, 1997; Kelly, 1999). It is alleged that this factor usually helps when adapting to the established process in the school (Lareau, 1997; Kelly, 1999; Cummins, 2000; Robinson-Pant, 2001). The use of the indigenous language may be helpful in making the school appear less daunting. In Zambia, the use of English has often been blamed by policy makers for the decline in literacy levels (Kelly, 1999; Linehan, 1999). Although it has been recognised and in some cases proven that African languages can be used in an educational context, there is little evidence to suggest that this has been effectively implemented (Heugh, 2000; Baldauf and Kaplan, 2004). Little has been done generally in multilingual, African countries to increase their capacity to transmit indigenous language instruction beyond the primary years (Alexander, 2000; Heugh, 2000; Baldauf and Kaplan, 2004; Alidou, 2009; Prah, 2009).

In this particular study what was evident was that using a familiar vernacular was largely effective in socialising children in the unfamiliar context of the classroom. The flexibility in language use (teacher reverting to the indigenous language to aid understanding) does not, however, suggest that this is a bilingual programme. What we see here is what is commonly referred to as the free use of two or more languages (Oskar, 1971, cited in Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981). Bilingual education involves promoting levels of functionality and competence (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981; Cummins, 2000; Herdina and Jessner, 2002). This would then support the argument that bilingualism might have positive effects on linguistic and cognitive development (Cummins, 2000, Brock-Utne, 2000; Alidou, 2009). However, this is highly dependent on providing the appropriate conditions (Cummins, 2000). In this context, the availability of opportunities to develop bilingual literacy can be contested. This is because indigenous languages are confined to initial literacy and the two or three year programmes end abruptly (Linehan, 1999). Therefore, the NBTL like similar bilingual

programmes in several African countries may be seen as a transition programme (Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995; Alidou, 2009).

At one level, my discussion on language and literacy has centred on the significance of English in a globalised context (Phillipson, 1992; Pennycook, 1998; Carter and Youssef, 1999; McEntee-Atalianis and Pouloukas, 2001). The notion of globalisation may demand that nation states conform to some uniformity of development as dictated by a globalised world (Gunnarsson, 2000). Such conceptions are seemingly rooted in cultural, technological and economic models that are being perpetuated by western norms (Kellner, 2000). Several African countries are inextricably linked historically and economically to these western ideologies (Pennycook, 1994; Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995; Pennycook, 1998). Although these conceptions are typical of current thinking, these expectations may be highly unrealistic (Rassool, 2007). What is significant is that several African countries face severe economic challenges (Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995; Baldauf and Kaplan, 2004). The 'ties' to western economies are heavily weighted towards donor preferences and the perceived benefits of these relationships can be contested (Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995; Pennycook, 1998; Alidou, 2009). Hence, although African countries are politically independent, this 'independence' does not often translate to 'freedom of choice'. Some of the choices they make often need to conform to donor preferences (Alidou, 2009).

At another level my discussion suggests African languages should be accorded more significance in education (Alexander, 2000; Brock-Utne, 2000; Baldauf and Kaplan, 2004; Prah, 2009). However, the current status is that the advocated programmes may be designed to do no more than meet the minimal local or national expectations (Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995; Alidou, 2009). This is unlikely to make indigenous languages any more significant than they currently are in an educational context (Musau, 1999; Baldauf and Kaplan, 2004). It is well documented that parents and society aspire for the dominant literacy, English (Kashina, 1994). This is because of the higher status it enjoys and the advantages it may present in the world of employment (Barrett, 1994; Kashina, 1994). More generally, it is also assumed the indigenous languages (which often represent 'informal' functions) are to be learnt informally. It is not expected that they should be part of education and training. Therefore the government is expected to provide opportunities that are construed as 'formal'. For example, several parents send their children to school to learn English (Barrett, 1994; Kashina, 1994). At this point it may be problematic for policy makers to present convincing arguments for using indigenous languages in education. In Zambia, we have seen how the NBTL, which in some cases has had significant impact, is not a national objective.

Globalisation's equation to modernity may be unchallenged but it does not mean that its potential to exclude goes unnoticed (Rassool, 2007). The NBTL initiative may not be in conformity with the exaggerated perspectives of the west which portray English as the only literacy (McEntee-Atalianis and Pouloukas, 2001). I have argued that these views may exist in tension. In particular, I have stressed that the use of English as an international language does not always translate into achievements. In economically and socially disadvantaged countries, meeting the needs of a global economy has perpetuated a decline in living conditions. In Zambia, this has impacted on the socio-economic status of several families. Therefore expectations of developing and often undeveloped Sub-Saharan states should not be equated to developed western states

(Kellner, 2000). Most recently, limitations have been acknowledged in the capacity to deliver sustainable literacy programmes (Alidou, 2009; Brock-Utne and Skattum, 2009). This may have further implications for education. Therefore, the processes of development in relation to this globalised context will take different forms in different contexts (Kellner, 2000).

In these African contexts, emphasis should be on what is relevant and necessary. In particular, the focus should be on skills that enable the citizens to participate and survive locally (Street, 2001; Egbo, 2004). I have emphasised how the success of the NBTL was most evident in the values that were being promoted by the learning environment. What was evident was the reflection of elements of a transformative pedagogy (Armour, 2001). Children were demonstrating critical thinking through practical action. For instance, the focus on group work revealed that the learners are developing leadership skills through the opportunities provided. They co-operated and collaborated in isolation of the teacher who remained focussed on the teacher centred activity. The new methodology (child centred approach) is significant in this regard. These practices in initial literacy created an enabling environment spurred by active participation (Armour, 2001). The issue here is not what standards of literacy are appropriate for which communities but what is significant and relevant in different contexts (Street, 2001; Egbo, 2004). The skills, I have highlighted enabled the learners to participate in the teaching and learning activities I observed.

In Zambia, the language policy has not been changed and English remains the official language of instruction. Teachers are encouraged to use their flexibility to aid comprehension and communication. In such instances it is left to the individual schools to opt for whatever practice they find beneficial. A proposed change in national language policy is, however, unlikely in this context. This is because several reasons advanced for the choice of language policy after the attainment of political independence in 1964 may still be valid today. Therefore the realistic expectation in this situation is that English will continue as the medium of instruction and the dominant literacy as dictated by global perspectives (Pennycook, 1998; Rassool, 1999). This is also supported by the argument that indigenous languages are not effectively developed to be used in further education (Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995; Baldauf and Kaplan, 2004).

However, the facts I have just outlined should serve as a source of encouragement. Indigenous language initiatives should be developed and extended to more schools in the country (Hornberger, 1993; Brisk, 1998). This may be even more pertinent in the context of 'new literacies', which concern themselves with social practices in a socio-cultural context (Gee, 1996; Street, 2001; Herbert and Robinson, 2001). Some western definitions may be largely insignificant in relation to practical realities in the Sub-Saharan context (Rassool, 2007). To be effective, one needs to be able to participate in activities with the different social groups one experiences. These experiences are more meaningful than the belief that everyone has a function in the 'global arena'. Indeed, very few Africans can conceive of their direct participation in a global world. In Zambia, our aim should be to strive to make effective use of our indigenous languages through purposive literacy interventions (Alexander, 2000; Brock-Utne, 2000; Alidou, 2009; Prah, 2009). Citizens should be empowered with skills that will allow them to survive in the 'real world', which to many is and can only be Zambia. Thereafter,

political will should be reflected in the adoption of meaningful educational policies (Baldauf and Kaplan, 2004).

7.3 CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER 7

This chapter brought together all the issues that have been discussed in the study. I have discussed the continued significance of English and its implications for language learning and literacy in this context. I have discussed my methodological choices and how they were useful in gathering data. I have also discussed the policy, practices and perceptions that my data analysis revealed and which have been presented as findings in relation to this.

Having discussed these issues, I will now go on to my final chapter. This brief chapter proposes some recommendations in light of some of the issues that have been raised.

Chapter Eight

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER 8

This study explored issues of language in this second learning situation. There are several positive factors highlighted in this study. Paramount among them is the enthusiasm for the programme that was exhibited by the participants in the study. These positive attitudes should serve the initiative well.

However, several needs are indicated in this study. Among others, the study reasserts the clear need for more trained personnel, increased funding and material resources. I would like to propose two recommendations that might be useful in aiding this worthy cause.

8.2 LANGUAGE POLICY

As a sovereign and independent country, the government's ultimate goal should be to ensure that the education it offers is significant to meet the needs of its citizens. Therefore a clear and inclusive language policy should be articulated. This policy should acknowledge the inherent rights of every child to have access to an internationally recognised language as well as provide opportunities that ensure the sustainability of the child's mother tongue. The indigenous languages in use should be enriched with cohesive and coherent teaching and learning strategies to increase their educational worth. Thus education should be accessible and teachers should be sufficiently trained to deliver quality education efficiently and effectively.

8.3 THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT: RESOURCES

The instructional conditions in schools need to be made favourable in order to develop sustainable bilingual programmes. This is possible through the provision of adequate and relevant resources. From the respondents' current perspective, a key impediment to the success of the initiative is the scarcity of resources. The general assumption was that a key indicator of achievement lay in the availability of resources. However, the dependence on externally generated resources may not be an appropriate solution to the problem. In my classroom observations I saw several commercially produced resources (work-cards, visual aids, picture charts). Nothing had been produced locally. I have had the opportunity to teach in various well resourced 'international' schools. In all these schools and others I have been privileged to visit over the years, I have seen evidence of 'teacher-made' materials.

Teachers in the initiative should be encouraged to make work-cards and other resources to supplement existing resources. A further alternative is to have resources developed by Zambian scholars who have a better understanding of the socio- cultural and socio-linguistic context. I have already pointed out how the use of corrupted forms of English in educational material in Zambia may not be helpful. The indigenous languages in use

are critical to these operations. The learners are likely to proceed with a deficient knowledge of the languages if they are denied the correct terminology. This issue is important for their bilingual development. The use of ‘corrupted forms’ may perpetuate the impression that these languages are subordinate and inadequate for educational purposes.

8.4 CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER 8

I acknowledge that this is a very brief chapter. This is because in proposing these recommendations I am fully aware of the current economic situation prevailing in the country. This might be a constraining factor. I do, however, hope the recommendations I have proposed may be useful in the continued application of the NBTL initiative some time in the future.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: 1 (ZAMBIA)

QUESTION	ANSWER
1) What are the origins of Breakthrough to Literacy?	The Breakthrough to literacy Course developed and used in the United Kingdom in the 1990's was later translated for use in African languages by the Molteno Project, an NGO in South Africa. It has been used successfully in various Southern African countries and we developed NBTL under PRP from the original breakthrough to make it more Zambian, more teacher friendly and more durable.
2) What approach is being used to teach Literacy in schools?	The Curriculum Development Centre has developed to de-link the teaching of Literacy from languages and make the teaching of literacy separate and deal with it as a subject on its own.
3) How are these strategies being implemented?	The strategy at Grade 1 is to fast track reading and writing skills while building up to a level of spoken English that will allow the skills developed in the local language to transfer to English in Grade 2. In addition to the Literacy Hour there is also an oral component, "Pathway to English" (one hour per day). There are 10 periods of Literacy with a Zambian language focus in Grade 1 and an English focus in Grade 2.
4) How are these skills that are acquired transferred?	'Pathway to English' continues in grade 2 and is supported by Step Into English (SITE). SITE covers all that was done in NBTL. For instance, the same supplementary readers that were used in grade 1 are now used, except they are in English. This is seen as a cross-cultural study and the same child-centred methodology and classroom management strategies are applied.
5) What other skills are necessary to aid literacy development.	For grades 3 to 7, PRP Has developed a course called, 'Read On' which provides for bilingual literacy development and consolidation. Literacy is still allocated an hour in Grades 3 and 4 and half an hour in grades 5 to 7.
6) How successful is this the transfer of methodology and classroom management?	The child centred methodology and classroom management has been a key strategy of the initiative. Its impact is very significant.
7) What training is available to teachers and inspectors?	Piloted and field-tested materials are supplied to teachers along with practical training in the use of materials conducted by trainers who themselves have been identified for their excellence through the piloting process.

<p>8) What assessment strategies are in place and how do you measure achievement?</p>	<p>There are a number of achievements. The programme was piloted in Kasama in Northern Zambia in 25 schools in 1998. It was evaluated by independent consultants as ‘an unqualified success’. This was a convincing argument for familiar language literacy. The evaluation report on the pilot programme carried out in Kasama during 1998 stated: “The programme was an unqualified success; children in Breakthrough to Literacy (BTL) classes were reading and writing at a level of Grade 4 or higher in non BTL classes.” One of the first activities of the PRP was to establish reliable baseline data against which future gains in Literacy could be measured. For this purpose a Literacy test was developed for both English and Zambian languages. The first tests were administered in 1999. This test was then repeated in 2002 and we found that schools that had received interventions under the PRP. The results were impressive. In 1999, 2001, 2003, a sample of pupils from 40 randomly selected schools were tested at Grade 5 level in literacy and numeracy to see how well the overall education system is performing in Zambia as part of a national assessment exercise. It was again stated that the initial assessment of the impact of the PRP indicated huge gains in learning achievement levels. Overall the results showed that pupils at Grade 4 who had started with PRP courses were out performing pupils at Grade 5 level in literacy and numeracy.</p>
<p>9) How true is the assertion that this policy can only succeed in rural areas?</p>	<p>The fact that initial reading and writing skills were taught in and through a language that was unfamiliar to the majority of the children was believed to be a major contributory factor to the backwardness in reading shown by many Zambian children. This was, however, common in urban areas as well.</p>
<p>10) Does this signify a change in national language policy?</p>	<p>The language of instruction post 1996 is still officially English, but with a directive from the Permanent Secretary to schools that this be an aspiration to be achieved by the end of Grade 4 at a pace that is appropriate to learning needs. Textbooks are in English but teachers are encouraged to use the local language whenever it benefits learning and understanding. In reality, local languages predominate in the early grades particularly in rural areas.</p>
<p>11) What opposition have you faced in implementing the programme?</p>	<p>There has been some opposition from Members of Parliament about this new language policy. They have been convinced that the language policy hasn’t changed but the literacy policy is to use whatever oral resources are available to children. In an area as sensitive as language, where people’s feelings of worth and identity are much enshrined in</p>

	<p>their native discourse, there is a need to be careful. This has been one major factor for retaining English, a foreign language as the official language of instruction. The Ministry of Education acknowledges that while familiar- language literacy is desirable, mother tongue literacy should be the ultimate goal. A policy of inclusion is likely to face less political opposition.</p>
<p>12) What other challenges do you face?</p>	<p>A major challenge has been the untidy nature of the present language of instruction model. Textbooks in Grade 1 and other grades are in English. The lack of capacity in the area of Literacy and particularly of initial literacy. Some experts believed that all material to complement the programme could be achieved through a series of quick workshops and implementation of the programme could be achieved countrywide.</p>

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: 2 (LESOTHO)

1) What is the national language policy in Lesotho?	The policy in all government primary schools is that Sesotho, the mother tongue must be the medium of instruction in the first three years of primary education. A gradual transition into English as a medium of instruction is from grade 4 upwards.
2) What are some of the major steps that have been taken in Education in Lesotho?	The Ministry of Education decided to implement a policy of Free Education from the year 2000. The purpose was to give all children equal access and equal chance of an improved education. Some officials visited countries like Uganda and Malawi (other African states that provide Free Education) to see how best the policy works. It was also clear the implementers were not pleased with the quality of education being provided, so the government of Lesotho made a commitment to the policy, bearing in mind it would strive to ensure quality. As a result of this observation, the government undertook to 'improve the way teachers teach.' Another step was BTL.
3) What were the initial steps you took in implementing the BTL programme?	The first consideration was to focus on Numeracy and Literacy as critical skills and also basic rights. Reading and Writing were given priority and so the government introduced the BTL and offered a training programme in the Early Specialisation unit. In 2001, a small group of teachers were given initial training.
	In the process it became necessary to seek the aid of the Molteno Project of the Republic of South Africa for the appropriate learning materials that complement N.B.T.L. and a project proposal. The learning resources were then sourced through Macmillan, Longman with the aid of Irish aid and UNICEF, which helped to fund the Free Education Policy. Molteno also undertook to train a cohort of inspectors and curriculum advisors who in turn would supervise trainers. The programme was fully operational in 2002 and Irish Aid support for the project runs through to the end of 2004. Unfortunately it was anticipated that by the end of 2004, out of the total 9000 teachers country wide, at least 2000 should have been trained, there are currently only 80 trained trainers, inspectors, curriculum educators and teachers. This falls grossly under expectation.
4) What hurdles have you faced in implementing the programme?	It must be made clear that there were hurdles to the implementation of the programme. This manifested itself in the resistance exhibited by some personnel in the College of Education who felt Government and Molteno side-stepped them in the training and implementation

	<p>especially as the Early Specialisation Unit had undertaken a similar process in the 1990's. The colleges felt they were sufficiently equipped to provide the expertise as opposed to Molteno trainers.</p>
<p>5) What have opposition have you faced in implementing the programme in a Bilingual context?</p>	<p>Some parents were also against the programme. They were of the view that they send children to school to learn English and not the vernacular, which can easily be picked up at home. This is because they believe that there are more benefits to be derived from the learning of English. English is an important language in business, trade and industry and it is believed acquiring the language is more likely to improve their children's welfare and place them at an advantage in education and later life. These advantages greatly outweigh fluency in Sesotho. However, there were also strong arguments for promoting literacy. As you know Sesotho is the mother tongue of close to 95% of the country. Advocates of the M1 state that upon entering grade 1, the children come with a wealth of vocabulary from home. Using the knowledge they come with from home, starting with simple words, they are able to construct sentences based on this prior knowledge. It is easy for children to use the technique of 'word recognition' to recognise words on the basis of the words they know. For instance 'bana' (meaning child) If the child already has the concept of the word, the wide use of picture charts in BTL, depicting different local scenarios, e.g. A BOY CROSSING THE STREET encourages vocabulary discussion, reinforcement and extension. In this way the children learn a certain group of words and they also learn that sounds are built up. The children then learn the sentences they have constructed and make a connection. In the breakthrough to language the same skills will be used to reinforce learning.</p>
<p>6) How well resourced is your programme?</p>	<p>Initially, Molteno maintained that they had significant and sufficient resources for the programme in Sesotho (a language which is also spoken in the RSA). The Basotho were, however, quick to point out certain orthographical differences. For instance the <i>li</i> sound in Lesotho is pronounced as a <i>di</i> sound. A cultural contextual difference was also demonstrated; whereas rural life in Lesotho consists of homestead, domesticated animals and vegetable patches that belong to individual families who make up the community, rural life in South Africa is punctuated by African families living in a hut and toiling away on a white man's vast farm with no communal life. This imagery is not consonant with the Lesotho.</p> <p>Another consideration was the multiplicity of languages in RSA. This tends to influence the overlap in drawing</p>

	<p>up learning materials. Most resources in RSA were multilingual, giving examples in the different languages and the teacher has the choice of the particular language that applies in their situation. The Basotho insisted that the original materials be adapted to suit their variant of Sesotho: linguistic and cultural context using local experts to avoid RSA corrupted forms e.g. PLAASE AS OPPOSED TO PLAATJE (meaning farm)</p>
7) What are future plans do you have for the programme?	<p>In support of the efficacy of BTL it is suggested similar approaches to literacy be extended to adult learners and at any level in education where literacy levels are inadequate. The Government would like to see all teachers in the schools BTL competent, whereas in Zambia at the moment BTL competence in the pilot schools is optional.</p>
8) How are literacy levels and attainment being measured in Lesotho?	<p>The South African Consortium for Measuring Educational quality (a UNESCO funded project) was set up to measure levels of attainment across Central and Southern Africa. SAMEC measures attainment at grade 3 and 6 levels and a study conducted before the implementation of BTL showed that literacy levels were low. In 2003, the National Curriculum Development Centre and Examinations Council of Lesotho, conducted a baseline study in Literacy and Numeracy, similar to the one conducted in Zambia by Kelly (1999). This study showed that about 50% of Grade 6 students were attaining the expected levels. (World Bank Website) The evaluation study conducted in 2003 indicates that BTL is making a difference.</p>
9) What notable successes have been made so far?	<p>It is important in a cultural context because Sesotho has a place in the society. Notwithstanding, however, there are not many reading materials that are likely to be used as supplementary texts. Most texts are academic, and even then they form the basis for the core curriculum and are not supported by any literature. Not much has been done to accelerate the progress made in school. They are no translations of literary and other texts except in The Holy Bible. One might argue that at least all the children can read the bible with this literary competence. But Lesotho is multi-denominational and not everyone is a Christian.</p> <p>He referred to the lack of a reading culture in the society as a 'social ill'. He also stressed that though some people see BTL as important in a cultural context, they don't equate this to the educational context that English immediately evokes. English is still supreme. Being educated is equated to mastery in English. The BTL curriculum is based on the assumption that sufficient work is being done in Grade 1, 2 and 3. As a</p>

	<p>consequence, BTL is not being reinforced and strengthened in higher grades. The syllabus in the 3 grades also appears repetitive and it becomes difficult to inculcate gains in higher grades when it is shoved aside. The argument is that BTL ensures competency in English, but the repeated use of prescribed readers in the programme and follow up years, places limitations on the learner.</p>
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APPENDIX C

FIELD NOTES (ZAMBIA)

<p>A. The Issue of Resources My concern was to establish whether resources are likely to make the N.B.T.L. more effective and efficient. My discussants focussed on the issue of resources. The elements that they brought up in their views related mainly to the itemised list.</p>	<p>The group focussed on the current resources necessary to steer the programme. They identified the following factors as being necessary for the smooth running of the initiative:</p> <p>Resources in the form of supplementary readers. Visual aids to stimulate discussions. Work cards to be used in group activities. The need for a variety of workbooks to complement exercises.</p> <p>The issue of resources was recurrent and it was clear it is a burning issue. They were however, confident that the governments will solve the problem. This is summed up in the sentences:</p> <p>“We definitely need a lot of resources.” “We are sure the government will do something about this.”</p>
<p>B. The Curriculum and the Child-Centred Approach My concern here was to find out the opinions about the new teaching methodology.</p>	<p>In relation to the new curriculum: N.B.T.L., my discussants revealed the following:</p> <p>Their appreciation of the concept of child centred methodology.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Their understanding that the new teaching approach would facilitate the transfer of BTL to other areas of the curriculum. 2. Their belief in its effectiveness in bilingual literacy development. 3. The improvement in classroom management. 4. The perception that it encourages a problem solving approach. <p>My discussants concluded with the following statements:</p> <p>“Classroom management has been improved with bilingual literacy development as the teacher can resort to the L1 if the child does not understand.” “The child centred approach focuses on the child and is appropriate.” “In future we might see a situation where we will say that Zambia benefited from N.B.T.L.”</p>
<p>C. Learning: Global Skills It was necessary to try and establish how effective this new methodology was in Learning.</p>	<p>My discussants expressed their views on Learning in the context of building knowledge and skills. They were of the view that N.B.T.L. is useful in building essential skills.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They believed that the learners are exposed to world knowledge and thus acquire cultural skills that enable them to cope globally. 2. Their perception was that this learning is useful

	<p>in the social development.</p> <p>3. They also stressed that this type of Learning is able to reinforce culture.</p> <p>These views are summarised in the following quotations:</p> <p>“We want the children to develop into world citizens.”</p> <p>“We found the state of affairs to be totally unacceptable.”</p> <p>“The only vehicle available for literacy is N.B.T.L.”</p>
D. Highlighting Teaching Methodology: Child-Centred Activities; Group Work	<p>In relation to the new teaching methodology, my discussants remarked on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The perceived significant personal and social development of the individual child 2. The perceived cultural development as a result of the bilingual exposure from the programme 3. The enabling environment group work activities had created 4. The relevance and significance of the diverse skills acquired from group work; the development of leadership skills 5. They also acknowledged that there was room for improvement <p>Their views were concluded with the following statements:</p> <p>“Children have adapted well and are working very well together”.</p> <p>“Some of the things, we will continue to improve them in the long run.”</p>
E. Achievements	<p>In relation to achievements, the focus group discussants highlighted the following properties and were quick to attribute this to the new teaching methodology:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They described the learning as successful. 2. They stated that they had observed an improvement enrolment figures. 3. They commented on improved attendance and acknowledged the support of parents and the communities 4. They were of the view that teachers were more motivated with government support <p>The following sentences summarised their overall view. “We appreciate what the government is doing”. “We are pleased that our friends are planning to introduce N.B.T.L”.</p>

APPENDIX D

TEACHER : OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

Observe the teacher and pupil carefully during the lesson. Assess the teacher on each separate item. Tick the number that most closely indicates your view of the teacher's performance. 1 is a low score and 7 is a high score.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Skill in gaining class attention							
Skill in explaining							
Skill in asking questions							
Skill in recognizing pupils' difficulties of understanding							
Skill in encouraging appropriate pupil response							
Use of non-verbal cues e.g. gesture and facial expressions							
Lesson management							

APPENDIX E

CLASSROOM VISIT ONE

TEACHER ONE: OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

Observe the teacher and pupil carefully during the lesson. Assess the teacher on each separate item. Tick the number that most closely indicates your view of the teacher's performance. 1 is a low score and 7 is a high score.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Skill in gaining class attention					✓		
Skill in explaining					✓		
Skill in asking questions					✓		
Skill in recognizing pupils' difficulties of understanding					✓		
Skill in encouraging appropriate pupil response						✓	
Use of non-verbal cues e.g. gesture and facial expressions						✓	
Lesson management					✓		

APPENDIX F

CLASSROOM VISIT TWO

TEACHER TWO: OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

Observe the teacher and pupil carefully during the lesson. Assess the teacher on each separate item. Tick the number that most closely indicates your view of the teacher's performance. 1 is a low score and 7 is a high score.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Skill in gaining class attention					✓		
Skill in explaining					✓		
Skill in asking questions					✓		
Skill in recognizing pupils' difficulties of understanding					✓		
Skill in encouraging appropriate pupil response						✓	
Use of non-verbal cues e.g. gesture and facial expressions						✓	
Lesson management					✓		

APPENDIX G

CLASSROOM VISIT THREE

TEACHER THREE: OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

Observe the teacher and pupil carefully during the lesson. Assess the teacher on each separate item. Tick the number that most closely indicates your view of the teacher's performance. 1 is a low score and 7 is a high score.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Skill in gaining class attention					✓		
Skill in explaining					✓		
Skill in asking questions					✓		
Skill in recognizing pupils' difficulties of understanding					✓		
Skill in encouraging appropriate pupil response						✓	
Use of non-verbal cues e.g. gesture and facial expressions						✓	
Lesson management					✓		

APPENDIX H

CLASSROOM VISIT FOUR

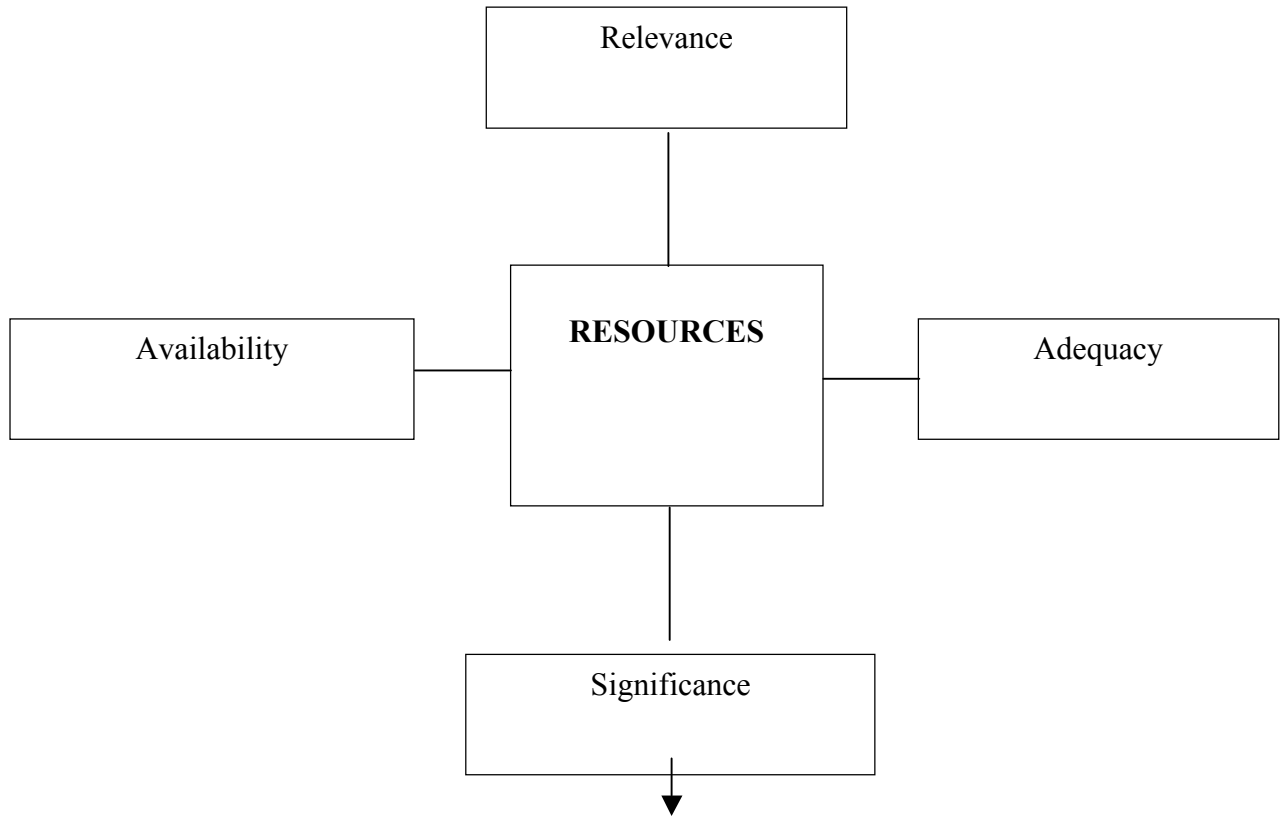
TEACHER FOUR: OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

Observe the teacher and pupil carefully during the lesson. Assess the teacher on each separate item. Tick the number that most closely indicates your view of the teacher's performance. 1 is a low score and 7 is a high score.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Skill in gaining class attention					✓		
Skill in explaining					✓		
Skill in asking questions					✓		
Skill in recognizing pupils' difficulties of understanding					✓		
Skill in encouraging appropriate pupil response						✓	
Use of non-verbal cues e.g. gesture and facial expressions						✓	
Lesson management					✓		

APPENDIX I

DIAGRAM 1



**What is emerging?
Is it conclusive?**



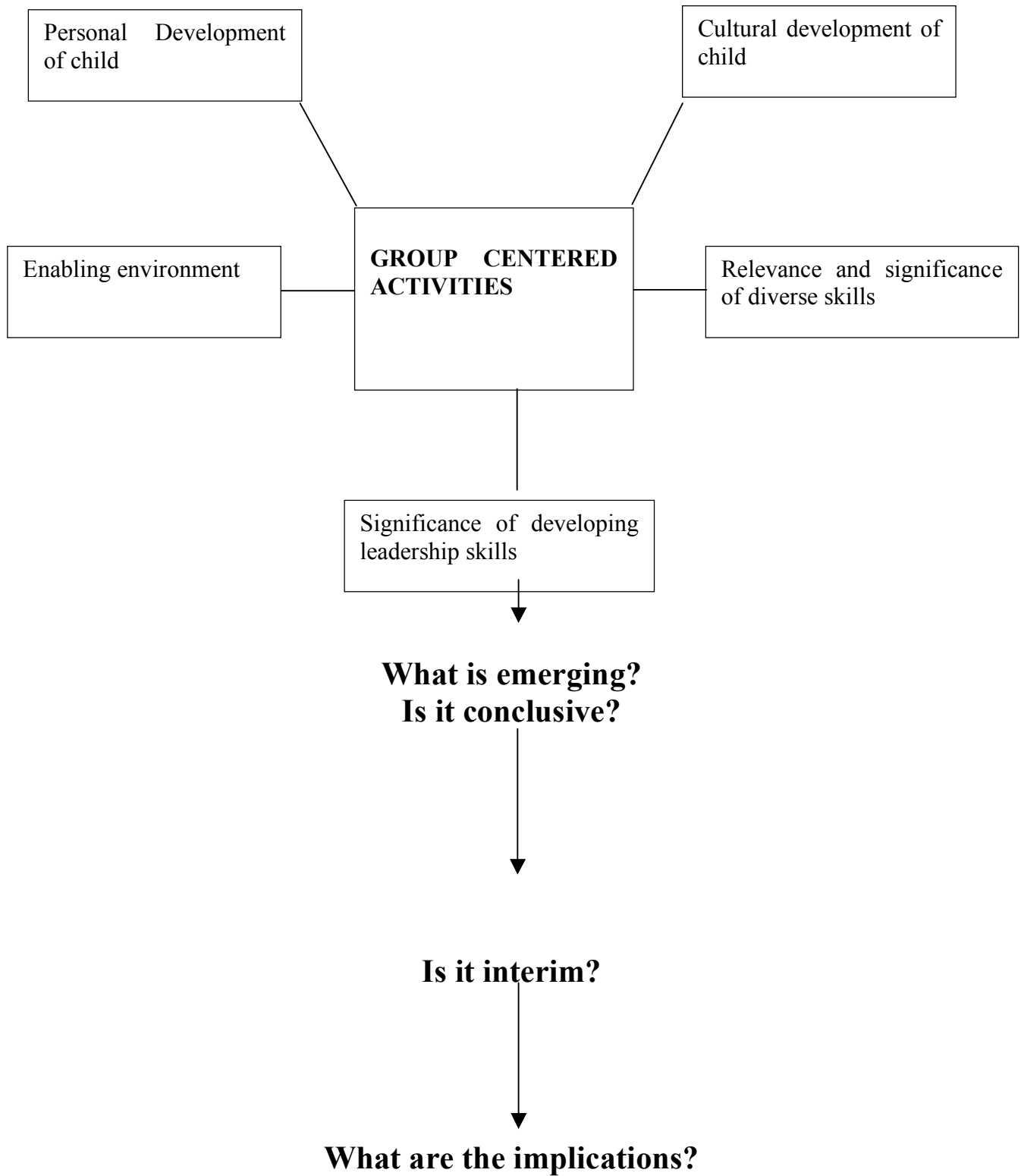
Is it interim?



What are the implications?

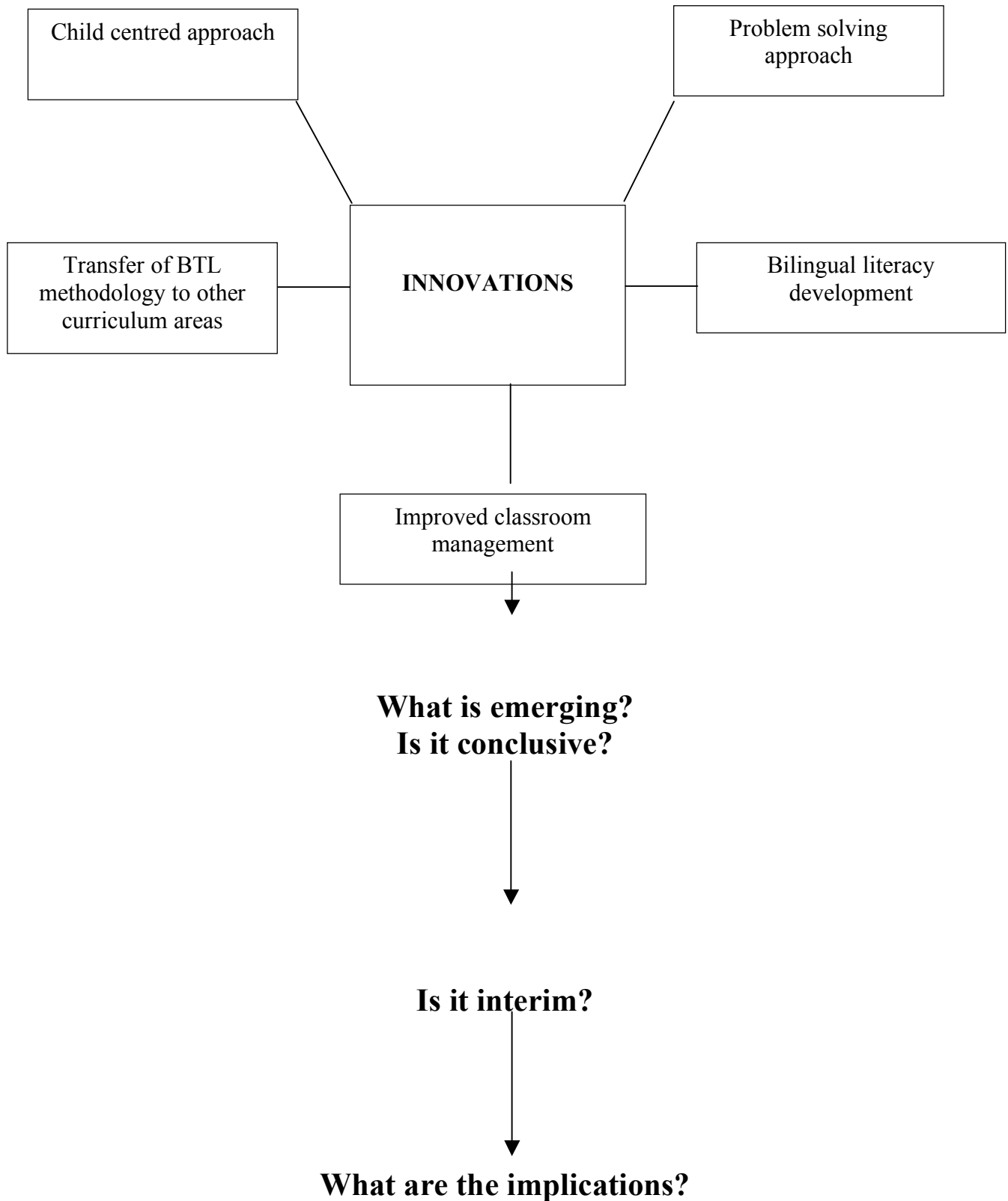
APPENDIX J

DIAGRAM 2



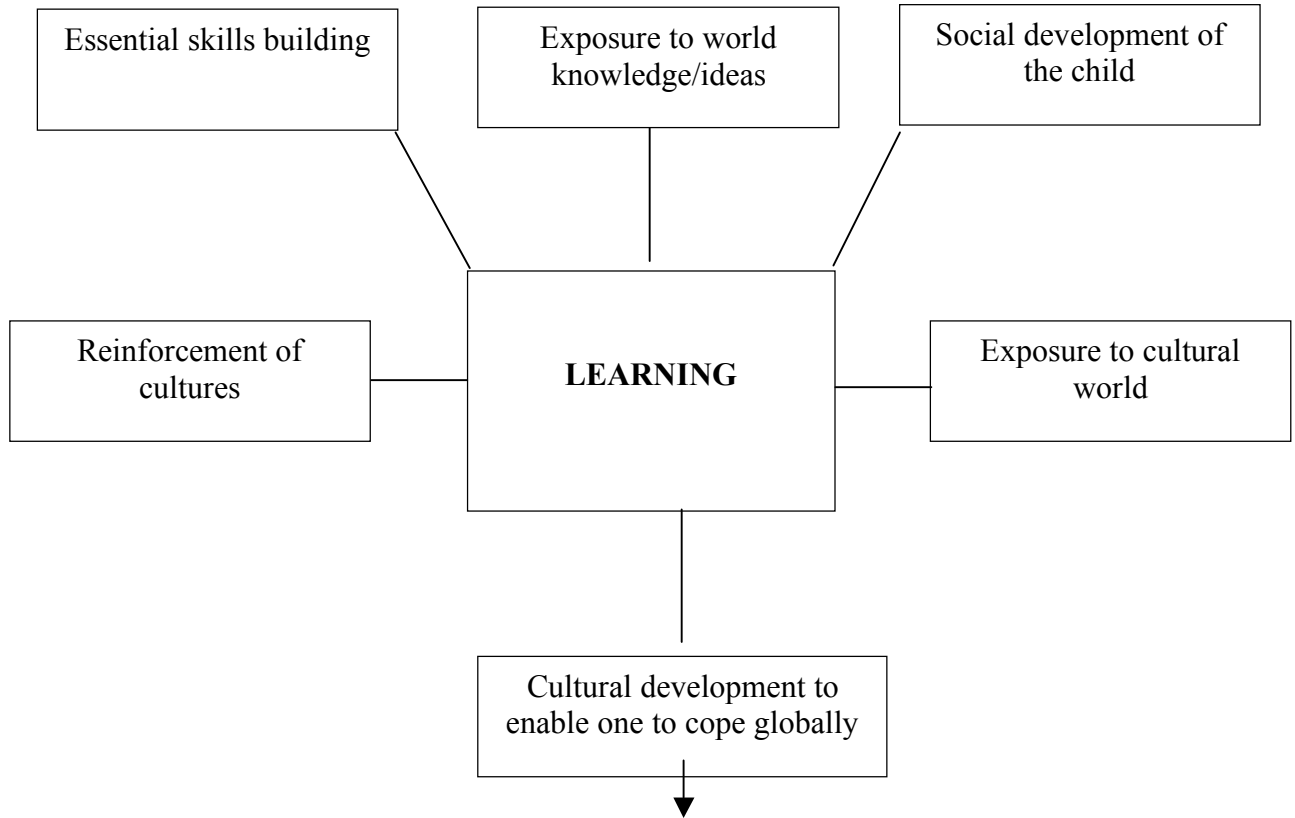
APPENDIX K

DIAGRAM 3



APPENDIX L

DIAGRAM 4



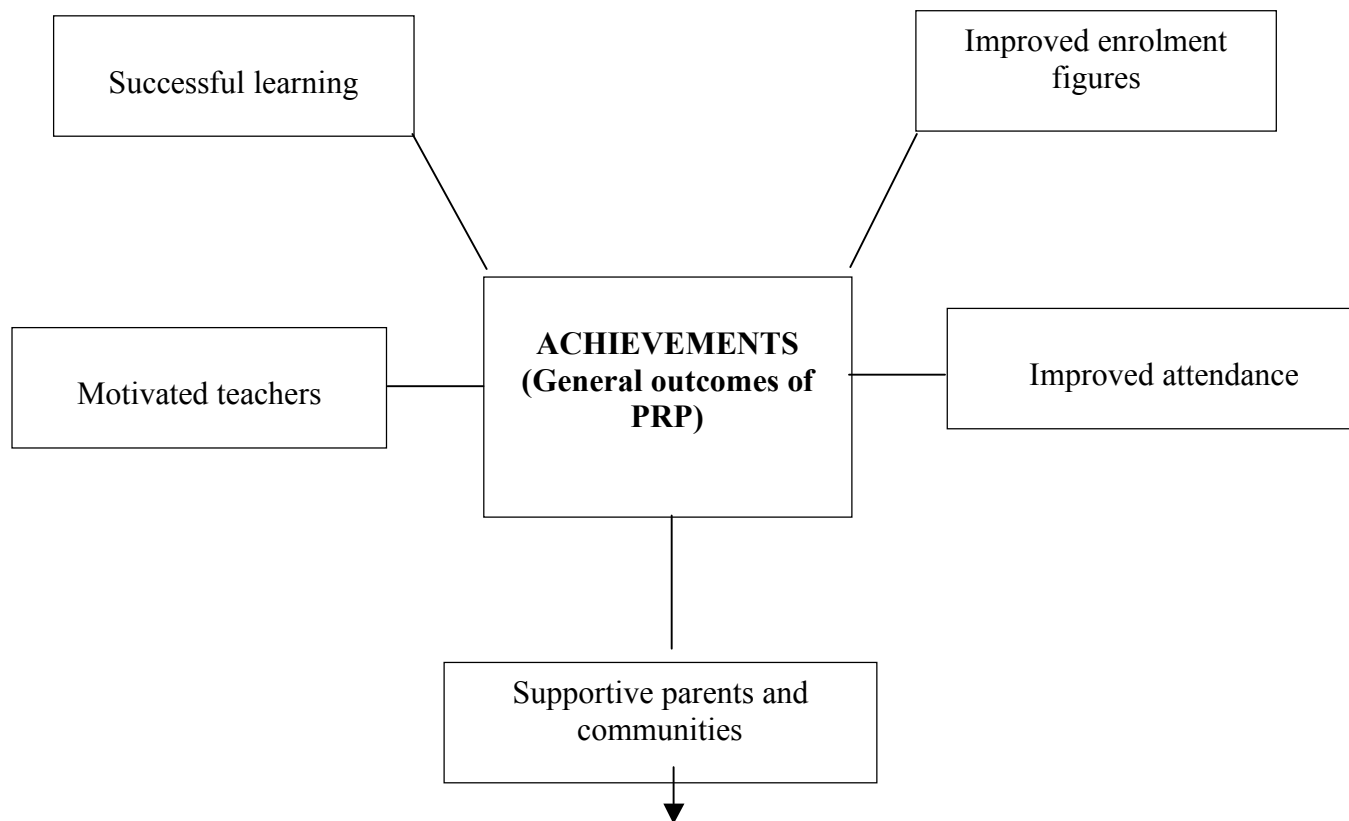
**What is emerging?
Is it conclusive?**

Is it interim?

What are the implications?

APPENDIX M

DIAGRAM 5



**What is emerging?
Is it conclusive?**



Is it interim?



What are the implications?